

No whiff of grapeshot, but Soames of the Hussars has a good war

"IS MY Right Hon friend [Defence Secretary Michael Portillo] aware that when the hon Member for Crawley [Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames] was an 11th Hussars officer fightin' for Queen and country, the Rt Hon gentleman the Leader of the Opposition [Tony Blair] and 12 of his cronies wuz crawlin' around Greenham Common in CND T-shirts wiv their legs and arms in the air, ready to give up...?" the rest was drowned in bellows.

The wonderful thing about a question from David Evans (C. Welwyn & Hatfield) is that it may come borne upon a raft of assertions each one of which, taken individually, is absurd, doubtful, grammatically defective, physically impossible, wholly inexplicable or just plain wrong - yet you always know what he means. He has a point.

His question yesterday to the Defence Secretary was ludicrous. When Mr Soames was a Hussars officer, Tony Blair was 14, the Greenham women hardly born. The

three years Soames spent with the Hussars, from 1967, passed during peacetime. There were no Mafekings to relieve or Khyber Passes to brave. Few doubt that this gallant man would be celebrated as Soames of Khartoum, Burma Soames or Nick "Zulu" Soames. If only fate had given him the chance, but fate never did. Instead, he became Equerry to Prince Charles - further from the whiff of grapeshot than the Greenham women.

And it is simply untrue that

MATTHEW PARRIS

POLITICAL SKETCH

Tony Blair joined these women. In youth he was more likely to be found clad in a white cassock, on his knees in prayer, than in a muddy tent among militant women with hairy armpits. Nobody, not even Mr Blair, is capable of crawlin' in the air, let alone both.

All Mr Evans meant was

that Mr Soames was once in the Army and Mr Blair was once a supporter of nuclear disarmament. But he had a point. His Tory mates came roaring to his support.

Yesterday at least, Soames had a good war. Evans can be forgiven for picturing him as some kind of heavyweight lancer, for Nicholas Soames

seems to come from a bygone age. Rescuing himself in mid-sentence from calling the Army "the infantry" he joshed Labour's principal defence spokesman, Dr David Clark, for having proposed (the claimed) a swords-into-ploughshares reincarnation of the British weapons industry.

Soames from television throughout the general election campaign - "because he's too much of a toff". This provoked laughter on all sides, notably from Soames, who shook on the Front Bench, giggling massively.

Then he rose. Brandishing an issue of *Defence News*, he told MPs that an article there by Dr Reid was puffed on the cover as being "Labour's Minister for the Shadow Armed Forces". Ensuing speculation over the Opposition's astonishing new defence strategy caused hilarity, notably from Soames, who sat down hugging himself and chortling some more.

A jolly day. But we noticed one depressing change.

Robed in something rich and strange and outshining every other MP, Dame Jill Knight (C. Edgbaston) has for years

dazzled and delighted us with her finery. But yesterday she turned up in a sober suit of forest green and black. Has Dame Jill seen John Major's new hat in *The Times* - and accepted defeat?

Hogg sparks fresh row by snubbing mad cow inquiry

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND ANDREW PIERCE

A FURTHER confrontation between the Government and the European Union was triggered yesterday by Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, when he dismissed the threat of legal action over his refusal to give evidence to a European Parliament inquiry into BSE.

Mr Hogg, in a defiant performance which cheered Tory Eurosceptics, said that European Parliament committees had no power to summon British ministers. "British ministers are accountable to the House of Commons. A number of members of the European Committee have aspirations to exercise a supervisory role over the ministers of sovereign states. I don't share that view. I don't think we should encourage those aspirations."

Mr Hogg was one of a number of senior politicians and EU officials called to give evidence to the four-month inquiry last year. But twice, to the fury of the European Parliament, he refused. He sent instead Richard Packer, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Mr Packer infuriated the inquiry committee when he claimed that it had been caused "largely by an act of God".

A draft report by the committee published yesterday was highly critical of Britain's handling of the BSE crisis. It listed 13 charges of maladministration, negligence and irresponsibility in dealing with the mad cow scare.

Reiner Böge, chairman of the inquiry, said yesterday Britain should be taken to the European Court over Mr Hogg's refusal to attend, which he said breached an agreement that member state ministers should co-operate with their work. He said the credibility of the European Parliament was at stake.

Herr Böge added: "The

legal position is clear. In domestic terms this is explosive stuff." Herr Böge, a German Euro-MP, repeated the challenge to Mr Hogg to face the committee. "It is quite clear that the minister has come to a Committee of Inquiry if he is invited. If we let this matter pass, we will be setting a precedent for the future."

While Mr Hogg's uncompromising stance won support from Tory MPs, many of whom have been critical of his handling of the BSE crisis, Brussels observers predicted that legal action was unlikely to materialise. They believe Mr Hogg was deliberately flexing his muscles on an issue he knew he would win.

Speaking *The World at One* on BBC Radio, Mr Hogg brushed aside the legal threat. The minister, who has the support of Cabinet colleagues for his stance, said: "The question is whether a minister should be summoned by a European committee to give evidence. The clear answer to that is 'No'. There is no treaty basis for that. If they bring legal action of that kind, they will lose it."

Herr Böge is planning to table amendments to the report outlining the options for

legal action against Britain. The European Parliament will vote on the report on February 19, raising the possibility of legal moves against Britain before the general election.

The Prime Minister, who was returning from India yesterday, was kept up to date on developments. A Downing Street spokesman said: "We have always said that British ministers are answerable to Westminster. It is not for them to be summoning us to the European Parliament."

A Tory official said that there was no prospect of ministers backing down. He said: "Douglas Hogg is neither going to give evidence nor end up in a court of law over this. Beef sales in Britain are restored virtually to their level before the BSE scare. A German chief executive of the European beef sales have not recovered at all. We take action. They carp."

Tory MPs rallied behind

Mr Hogg yesterday. David Nicholson, secretary of the Tory backbench agriculture committee, said: "British ministers are absolutely within their rights in refusing to co-operate, particularly when the offensive and objectionable EU ban on British beef is still in place."

But Labour and the Liberal Democrats accused Mr Hogg of running scared over BSE which had damaged the prospects of an early lifting of the beef ban.

Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, said: "Douglas Hogg should have taken the opportunity to spell out to the committee all the measures that we now have in place."

"He should have led from the front and put the position of the British Government. The minister's failings, and the damning indictment in the report, will not have helped Britain's efforts to get the beef ban lifted."

After a barrage of calls in the Lords yesterday for equal treatment for the troops' families, Earl Howe, a junior Defence Minister, said the Government was keen to help the Nepalese servicemen.

Peers pointed out that the 3,000 Gurkhas who will have to leave Hong Kong after the handover to China in the summer were needed in Britain to make up a shortage of manpower. They are to be attached to several units, including the Parachute Regiment. But they do not have British passports and had

been told that their wives could not accompany them to Britain. Peers also complained that the soldiers received only one eighth of the pensions of British servicemen.

Sher Bahadur Deuba, the Nepalese Prime Minister, had asked John Major for a pledge that Britain would allow Gurkhas to bring their families and would raise their pensions to British levels.

Lord Howe admitted that accompanied married service was a "legitimate aspiration" for the Brigade of Gurkhas and said that an announcement would be made next month. It is unlikely, however, that their pensions will be raised to the same level as their British counterparts.

Peers accused the Govern-

ment of being "hard-hearted". Viscount Slim, a crossbencher who served as a Gurkha officer, demanded a "pretty quick" resolution of the issue.

Lord Wyatt of Weeford, a crossbencher, said: "Everybody knows what the answer ought to be. Why can't you give it now?"

Lord Williams of Elvel, for Labour, said the Gurkhas "should be treated as an integral part of the British armed forces. This is a matter of urgency."

Lord Howe said there had been a "wide-ranging review" of Gurkha terms and conditions of service. But there were still implications for healthcare, education and social security benefits that had to be considered.

The supermarket giant would be advised to be on its guard. "It's been great fun and I'd definitely do it again," Mr Calcott said.

"I'm waiting for Tesco to do

a special offer on pineapples because I am rather partial to them."

The Tesco Club Card scheme has nine million members who receive vouchers every quarter in order to redeem goods at the stores. Mr Calcott is expecting to receive his vouchers in mid-February and will then have three months to use them up.

A spokesman for Tesco added that it was down to individual store managers whether or not they limited the quantity of goods customers purchased as part of the Tesco Club Card offers.

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A spokesman for Tes

Footballers deny plot to fix matches for cash

By LIN JENKINS

JOHN FASHANU, former footballer and star of *Gladiators*, and **Bruce Grobbelaar**, one of the best known faces in the English game, appeared in court yesterday accused of involvement in fixing matches. Mr Grobbelaar, the former Liverpool goalkeeper, was said to have collected £40,000 to throw a single match.

He, Mr Fashanu, and Hans Segers, goalkeeper at Mr Fashanu's club, Wimbledon, agreed to take part in match-fixing for a Far Eastern betting syndicate. Winchester Crown Court was told. Their co-accused, Heng Suan Lim, a Malaysian businessman, was said to be acting for the syndicate.

David Calvert-Smith, for the prosecution, told the court that the plot was uncovered in a "sting" operation by reporters from *The Sun* who filmed Mr Grobbelaar allegedly accepting £2,000 from a former business associate.

He said that Mr Fashanu, Wimbledon striker at the time, acted as intermediary, while Mr Grobbelaar and Mr Segers, the two goalkeepers, accepted cash to rig matches by influencing the outcome of football matches or as rewards for having done so between February 1991 and November 1994 and, in the



Hans Segers, left, John Fashanu and Bruce Grobbelaar, right, outside Winchester Crown Court yesterday on the opening day of their trial. They are accused of corruption



He said the goalkeeper was the obvious single player to approach to influence the result of a game. However, if the money was given and corruptly received on the understanding that the player would try to influence the result, then it did not matter if the result owed something or nothing to the assistance of the corrupt player.

He said that from 10,000 documents accumulated in evidence, a picture of corruption had emerged. Home and mobile telephone bills had shown Mr Segers and Mr Lim first began calling one another in August 1992 and Mr Grobbelaar and Mr Lim in November that year.

A snapshot of the bills on a day Wimbledon lost to Ipswich showed Mr Lim ringing a Mr Josef in Indonesia and then telephoning Mr Fashanu and Mr Segers, sometimes calling a telephone in the name of Buckley which Mr Fashanu used; he also held a bank account in that name. The calls would be back-to-back in quick succession, Mr Calvert-Smith said.

The Crown suggests that they give rise to a strong inference that the motive for the calls was the same.

He said that Mr Segers, who earned £80,000 a year, deposited large sums in a Swiss bank account, particularly after Wimbledon had lost matches. "These were not his salary or bonuses or lawfully obtained."

He had told police that it was the proceeds of crime in his youth. "The story of how he came by all this cash is implausible in the extreme," Mr Calvert-Smith said.

The case continues.

case of Mr Grobbelaar, between November 1992 and November 1994.

Mr Calvert-Smith said that Mr Grobbelaar, who was born in Zimbabwe and has been capped eight times for his country, had become embittered when his £160,000-a-year salary, earned at the height of his career at Liverpool, began to fall below that of younger players. He then became involved with the Indonesia-based syndicate after he was lured by the offer of a £40,000 to £60,000 payout to throw one match. The prosecution said that the syndicate aimed to rig a Liverpool

versus Newcastle game in November 1993, which the northeast club won 3-0.

Mr Calvert-Smith told the jury that all three footballers accepted money "to influence the results of games in order that the syndicate setting up this corrupt scheme could bet on the results, and if not the result, the goal difference".

The evidence of Mr Grobbelaar's former business partner, Christopher Vincent, a fellow Zimbabwean, is expected to form the central plank of the case against him in a trial that could last up to two months.

Mr Calvert-Smith said that:

Mr Vincent had told *The Sun* that Mr Grobbelaar had flown to Heathrow and driven a hire car to Mr Fashanu's office in London. They had been sent to the house of a friend of Mr Fashanu's in Finchley, north London, which Mr Fashanu was using, and had picked up £40,000 from Mr Fashanu. It was the largest single payment uncovered by police.

Mr Vincent had said that Mr Grobbelaar had told him in advance that he was going to "do the business this weekend" and when Liverpool lost 3-0 away to Newcastle in November 1993, he had telephoned him and described it as a "good result".

Four days later, Mr Vincent

and Mr Grobbelaar had flown to Heathrow and driven a hire car to Mr Fashanu's office in London. They had been sent to the house of a friend of Mr Fashanu's in Finchley, north London, which Mr Fashanu was using, and had picked up £40,000 in cash.

Mr Grobbelaar had given £20,000 to Mr Vincent for their safari holiday company, Mondoro Wildlife Corp Ltd, and put £5,000 into his testimonial fund. A model booked to do some promotional pictures for the company was paid £500 cash, even though no photographs were taken. The Crown is entitled to ask where did he get the money?" Mr Calvert Smith said.

Mr Vincent had also said that Mr Grobbelaar had his own secret code and would refer to a win as "a Wimbleton", a draw as "a Dundee" and a loss as "a Leeds".

Mr Calvert Smith said that in *The Sun* newspaper sting, Mr Grobbelaar had accepted £2,000 from a fictitious betting syndicate which promised him £100,000 if the result of a particular match went the right way. As a result, police had begun an investigation and uncovered systematic corruption over 3½ years.

Mr Calvert Smith said

some people would ask how it was possible for a single player to fix a match. "He may never have any opportunity to do so. His teammates or the opposition may frustrate him. Indeed, the Crown say that happened in January 1994 with Liverpool versus Manchester United. There is, of course, a limit to what people can do in front of 40 or 50,000 people and a television audience of millions which is not clear and obvious. You could not just let the ball roll between your legs. But goalkeepers do sometimes make mistakes, so the odd mistake can slip through."

HANS SEGERS was born in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, and joined Wimbledon as a goalkeeper in the same year as Mr Fashanu. His average annual income with the club had been £80,000. He began his career with PSV Eindhoven and played in the same Dutch under-18 side as Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager. He joined Wimbledon from Nottingham Forest for a transfer fee of £125,000. Last summer he signed for Wolverhampton Wanderers.

JOHN FASHANU was a striker for Wimbledon Football Club from 1986 to August 1994. He played more than 300 games for the team, known as the Crazy Gang, scoring 129 goals and collecting an FA Cup winner's medal in 1988. His salary averaged £200,000. He transferred to Aston Villa in the month that Mr Grobbelaar went to Southampton, and received a signing-on fee of £200,000, plus £1.35 million move. Injury ended his career in 1995.

Partisan jurors weeded out before the case kicks off

By LIN JENKINS

POTENTIAL jurors in the match-fixing case were asked whether they supported a football team before they were selected. One man who admitted to being a Liverpool supporter was quickly disbarred for someone without strong affiliations.

The judge, Mr Justice Tuckey, said that employees of *The Sun* or committed fans of Liverpool, Southampton or Wimbledon would not be considered eligible.

When one man claimed he might not be able to last the trial because of a holiday booked for April, the judge quipped: "We'll take a bet on you. Sorry, we won't take a bet

on you," as counsel and the footballers laughed.

Other potential jurors were excused, because they had young children at home, had to care for ill relatives or ran a family business that could not do without them for the estimated eight weeks of the trial.

As he opened the prosecution case, David Calvert-Smith complained that he felt as if he were "more in the doghouse than on the pitch". He craned his neck to see over the vast rows of box files containing copies of the 10,000 documents in the case and the judge agreed to break with convention and allow him and other barristers to move to the second row bench

where they were more visible. John Fashanu, Bruce Grobbelaar, and Hans Segers, all smartly dressed in Italian suits, chatted with court staff and signed autographs for them in the lunch adjournment. Mr Fashanu, much to his own amusement, even agreed to go back outside the court for press photographers who had failed to get a shot of him and his wife, Melissa Casse-Mapsi, when they arrived.

His wife joined Debbie Grobbelaar and Astrid Segers in the public gallery where the numbers were swelled by reporters. Proceedings are being relayed by speaker into another court for the overspill.

Knife killer snooped on ex-girlfriend

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A DOCTOR's daughter and her boyfriend were stabbed to death by her spurned lover after he secretly recorded them in a bedroom, a court was told yesterday.

Fiona Ovis, 28, and William Crompton, 18, were stabbed repeatedly by Andrew Cole, who broke into her bungalow when he listened via a microphone through the letterbox.

Chester Crown Court was told that afterwards, he cycled to a hospital where he produced a bloodstained knife, saying: "I murdered her."

Cole, 26, of Llandrindod Wells, Powys, has admitted killing the couple last May but denies murder on the grounds of diminished responsibility and provocation.

The jury was told that Cole had had a relationship for several months with Miss Ovis, the daughter of a GP. Lord Thomas of Gresford, QC, for the prosecution, said that, the week before the killings, Cole had been sedated in hospital for four days because of his distress at her new relationship.

Thirty-six hours after his release, he put a microphone from a tape recorder through her letterbox. Cole told police "I played it back and heard music and moans and groans. I just flipped."

The trial continues.

Prostitute 'gave taxman solace'

By TIM JONES

A SENIOR tax investigator yesterday broke down in the witness box in the Old Bailey as he described how family and work worries drove him into the arms of a prostitute.

Michael Alcock, 47, told a jury that he had begun an affair with Michelle Corrigan, 30, when his wife had been recovering from cancer. Mr Alcock, from Colchester, Essex, who denies 11 charges of corruption, said that because of his wife's illness the mood at home was very bleak. "We had some dark times. We were both frightened."

He told the court that he had first met Miss Corrigan through Hisham Alwan, one of the businessmen who was being investigated by the office

of the Inland Revenue where he worked as a group leader. The Iraqi-born oil consultant was, he said, one of the few men he could talk to about his problems. "I asked him if he could give me a name of someone who I could have a night out with to forget my problems," Mr Alwan, he said, had put him in touch with Miss Corrigan.

Mr Alcock and Miss Corrigan had gone to bed together. Mr Alcock said that Mr Alwan then told him he had paid Miss Corrigan between £200 and £250. "I paid him in cash. Nothing more was said."

Eventually, Mr Alcock developed an emotional attachment to Miss Corrigan. "We became kindred spirits." Miss Corrigan was like himself, "emotionally damaged" and they "needed each other".

Questioned by Anthony Arlidge, QC, for the defence, Mr Alcock agreed that he had bought expensive clothes for her. "I wanted to change her from a bimbo to something more elegant," he said. Some of the money that he had used to buy expensive cars had come from his wife's relatives.

Mr Alcock totally rejected the suggestion that he had been given money by taxpayers.

Mr Alcock, 54, denies three charges of corruption.

The case continues.

Alcock was concerned over his wife's illness.

The trial continues.

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Court backs police who took farmer's gun licence away

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

POLICE were right to revoke the gun licence of a fisherman who was mugged when he went out at night with a shotgun to protect his trout, a sheriff ruled yesterday.

Sheriff Kenneth Mure said that Derek Button, 60, of Sauchieburn, Stirlingshire, had been "imprudent and incautious" in arming himself with a double-barrelled shotgun when he went out in his pyjamas after an alarm went off.

Mr Button had contrasted his treatment with that of Thomas Hamilton, the gunman who killed 16 children and their teacher nearby in Dunblane. He said that Central Scotland Police had rejected pleas to revoke Hamilton's licence, despite a damning report from one of their own officers. "I was an ordinary

farmer attacked on my own land while trying to protect my stock, and yet my licence was taken off me in hours." He said that he suffered constant losses with fish being taken by herons, cormorants, mink and poachers.

At an earlier hearing in November, Mr Button said that a letter from Central Scotland Police had been hand-delivered to him on the day of the attack, even though he was a victim and not a criminal.

He had been alerted at 2am on May 10 by an alarm which indicated that something or someone was raiding his trout pond. He loaded his gun with blanks, put two live rounds in his pyjama pocket and headed off, unsure whether a poacher or an animal had triggered the alarm. About 50 metres from

Shopkeepers need weapon, says judge

By ADRIAN LEE

SHOPKEEPERS are entitled to keep a weapon to defend themselves from attack, a judge said yesterday. "All shopkeepers need a weapon, particularly Asians in this area," Judge Mitchell said when jailing a man for four years for attacking shopkeepers in east London.

Snaresbrook Crown Court was told that Terry Johnson, 27, assaulted and abused two Asians who ran an off-licence in Stratford. In May last year he hit Sajeet Sadasivan with a golf club while other men shouted racial obscenities and made death threats to his colleague, Raghuvaran Ravindran. Mr Sadasivan suffered two broken fingers.

Last year Johnson threw a sheet of glass at Mr Sadasivan but failed to hit him. That evening he returned with other men carrying metal bars and cricket bats, and attacked Mr Ravindran. The shopkeeper suffered stiches in a head wound.

Johnson, 27, of Stratford, admitted two charges of unlawful wounding.

Richard Furlong, for Johnson, said that he had joined the attacks only after they had been started by others. "Mr Johnson is not a man who habitually engages in racial abuse. He is someone who generally has a placid character."

The judge told Johnson: "I accept that you came into the first incident later than others, who don't regularly appear before this court, but you chose to join those involved in a racial attack and the message must go out that it will not be tolerated by the courts."

Vincent Burke, spokesman for the London Chamber of Commerce, said after the case: "We would draw the line at shopkeepers taking the law into their own hands, but they recognise rising crime as a growing problem. We have advised them to take reasonable security measures."

Mr Mure said: "The Chief Constable was concerned that the applicant had left his house with a shotgun in his possession in the possible belief of poachers trespassing on his premises. He was concerned about the danger to individuals of discharging even blank ammunition."

The judgment said the use of firearms to control vermin was acceptable, but not to protect property or person.

Mr Mure said: "The Chief Constable was critical of the fact that his officers were not alerted immediately, and before Mr Button himself investigated the presence of intruders."

"I have no hesitation in upholding the Chief Constable's decision as a reasonable and entirely justifiable one in the circumstances."

Mr Button was unavailable for comment, but said in November: "I have never used a gun against anybody, defensively or aggressively."



Keepers is set in 12 acres near Ascot, with a lake, swimming pool and a paddock. Branagh expects to move in during the summer

Stage is set for Branagh demolition job

By CAROL MIDGLEY

KENNETH BRANAGH, the actor and director, was granted permission yesterday to demolish a £1.3 million Victorian mansion to build a house in the style of an old English barn.

Branagh, who bought the country house last summer after separating from his wife, the actress Emma Thompson, will knock down Keepers, at Sunninghill, Berkshire, and replace it with a house with a gym, computerised lighting and cinema.

Surrey Heath Council formally approved his planning application to demolish the house, designed by Norman Shaw, who also designed New Scotland Yard. Building is expected to begin immediately.

Some locals have expressed concern that the new design will not blend with the surroundings. The present house has traditionally styled rooms, many with oak beams. Branagh originally applied for planning permission under the name Michael J. Smith of Kingslinton upon Thames. In the latest application he used his own name.

The property is in 12 acres with a lake, woods and a paddock. It is a few miles from Ascot. Branagh plans to spend £1 million on building the house, which



Branagh wants the oak beams to go when the building work begins

will have a triple garage and a swimming pool complex. The cinema is expected to seat between 70 and 100 and cost about £150,000. The house will have four bedrooms. The master bedroom will have its own sitting room and all bedrooms will have en-suite bathrooms.

Keepers, originally a lodge house, was extended by its former owner, Ken Gumbey, a builder and plant hire entrepreneur, to have six bedrooms and four reception rooms. He also built an indoor swimming pool and billiards room and put the property on the market last January.

Mr Gumbey said yesterday that he did not mind the house being demolished.

"It's a beautiful location and I know why he wanted it," he said. "He wants to build a more modern place that will suit his lifestyle. When I bought it, it was a lodge house, but I added rooms to it over the years."

"I met him when he came to view the house and he was very enthusiastic about it. You couldn't meet a more charming person and I hope he'll be very happy there."

Anthony Wardell, of Knight Frank, the estate agency that handled the sale, said: "Mr Branagh always had the idea that he wanted to create a dream home and just wanted to find the right location. He viewed it and fell in love with the place. He bought it in August for £1.3 million. It's in an ideal location because it's secluded and private, but is not far from London or Heathrow."

Branagh's quantity surveyors, Corrigan Gore, said that he hoped to move in to the new property at the end of the summer.

Birthday flight of fancy ended with a bump

By ADRIAN LEE

A FLYING lesson, booked by a wife for her husband's fiftieth birthday, descended into fiasco when the light aircraft ended up in a tree.

As the aircraft dangled nose down 15ft from the ground, one of the men aboard had to be rescued by firemen using a ladder. Another fell from the tree. The mishap was captured on video, complete with commentary, by

one of the passengers as they realised they were about to ditch.

According to a report into the accident published yesterday, the outing had, at first, gone according to plan.

The would-be pilot, William Johnson, his son, Adrian, 27, brother Ian, 48, and an instructor took off from Bournemouth airport for a short flight to Sandown, Isle of Wight. They landed safely and, after a break for refreshments, they prepared for their

return journey. But the instructor had an inkling that all was not well, telling his passengers that the wind direction and high temperature meant the climb after take-off would be poor.

The report by the Air Accident Investigation Branch into the July crash says that the instructor who was handling the aircraft was trying to gain speed, rather than height, initially.

The tactic worked until he hit a patch of disturbed air and the plane

began to sink. It hit trees 800 yards from the end of the runway.

As the plane dangled, three of the four occupants, who suffered slight injuries, managed to climb down the tree but the fourth had to be rescued.

The aircraft was removed by crane.

Adrian Johnson's wife, Julie, said yesterday: "It was a birthday none of us will ever forget. I think it was probably worst for Ian because he had never been in a plane before."

Lottery highlights confusing condition



evidence of the birth certificate.

Patients with transsexualism often have feelings of genital dysmorphia, also known as dysmorphism, in which they feel uncomfortable with their genital organs and wish to have their primary and secondary sexual characteristics removed and replaced by ones simulating those of the opposite sex.

Transvestism is quite different and is said by medical experts nearly always to affect heterosexual males. Certainly

partner rather than the attention of a psychiatrist. Strain can ensue if the wife or partner has been unaware of, or cannot accept, the fetish, and this may need treatment.

Transsexualism also needs understanding. In long-standing cases and after much discussion, surgery may be recommended. Mistakes can be made. This week it has been reported that a North Country man met all the criteria for an operation, but he removed his name from the waiting list days before the surgeons were to have removed his masculinity because he had fallen in love with, and was about to marry, a woman.

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Warrant for arrest of stalker

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A WARRANT has been issued for the arrest of a man who terrorised a family for two years, eventually driving them out of Scotland.

Stephen McDougall, 42, of Bearsden, near Glasgow, failed to appear at Dumbarton Sheriff Court yesterday for sentencing after being found guilty in November of breach of the peace. His harassment campaign against Kevin and Samantha Ayre, both 35, began after they bought his repossessed cottage in Milngavie, near Glasgow. He stalked them for two years, forcing them to move house twice. As a result, Mr Ayre, who now lives in the South of England, had to give up his executive position with Allied Distillers in Dumbarton.

Yesterday Sheriff John Fitzsimons issued a warrant for McDougall's arrest, explaining that he had sent the court a fax "basically saying he had decided not to show up". The Sheriff said: "I warned him that it was a condition of his bail that he had to appear today." It also emerged that McDougall, unemployed, had missed two appointments with psychiatrists to enable them to prepare reports.

Police said extra patrols would be made in the area.

Canute's church attacked

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

A CHURCH built by King Canute after his conversion to Christianity has been damaged by vandals who fired argongs through a stained glass window, smashed headstones and crosses in the graveyard and tried to set fire to the building.

St Andrew's Minster, in Ashington, Essex, was built in 1020, shortly after Canute became King. It survived the Reformation and other upheavals, but is today locked between services and is under constant risk of further vandalism. The Rev Frederick Kenny, priest-in-charge, described it as one of the most important religious buildings in the country. "We have an oak carving of Canute and a Viking ship hanging in the rafters. But the youths who hang around here seem only to want to damage the place."

The vandals ripped down posters from the porch, set them alight and pushed them under the door. The damaged Stigand window, named after Canute's chaplain who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, was held by airgun pellets.

Police said extra patrols would be made in the area.

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Catholic schools widen their net to fill places

By RUTH GOSFORD
AND JOHN O'LEARY

ROMAN Catholic independent schools are turning increasingly to pupils from other Churches to fill places, as growing numbers of wealthy Catholics send their children to rival public schools.

Children from other Churches are now in the majority at four out of ten Catholic independent schools, according to a survey published today. It says that the "dilution of the Catholic nature of our schools" is continuing, with only one school refusing to accept non-Catholic children.

Half of the 100 schools surveyed had increased pupil rolls over the past five years, although nearly a fifth had declined by more than 10 per cent. The research, by the Catholic Independent Schools Conference, also shows that a quarter were unable to fill all their places. Only 46 per cent had more applicants than places.

The survey highlights the trend towards fewer monks or nuns on the staff of such schools. Nearly half had no

religious" on the staff, compared with 35 per cent a year ago. More than half reported difficulty recruiting staff with the right religious and academic qualifications.

The survey has been published shortly after some of the leading independent Catholic schools pleaded for greater support from parents and bishops as increasing numbers of parents send their children to other public schools. For example, Eton, which appointed a Catholic chaplain in the early 1980s, now has nearly 150 Catholic boys, compared with a handful 20 years ago.

Two Catholic independent schools, Buckfast Abbey preparatory school in Devon and Belmont Abbey near Here-

ford, have closed recently. However, compared with the independent sector as a whole, Catholic schools are doing well, because of the strong demand from non-Catholics for a moral education. Last year, independent schools of all types recorded their first rise in pupil numbers since 1991. Over the five-year period, numbers are still down.

Father Anthony Sutcliffe, Head Master of Downside, near Bath, where numbers have fallen by a third in 20 years, said that he accepted non-Catholics only under exceptional circumstances. "In England I feel it is important for Catholics to be brought up in a Catholic culture," he said. "They need to understand it before facing atheism and the

dangers of being seduced purely by academic league tables in the mistaken belief that this alone will lead to a happy and successful life."

He added: "What is disappointing is that some Catholic parents are choosing non-Catholic schools, thus denying their children the opportunity of growing in a strong, committed and focused Catholic Christian community."

After-class clubs 'help to improve exam results'

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

EXTRA-CURRICULAR activities are as likely to boost a school's examination performance as the amount of homework pupils are set, government-sponsored research suggested yesterday.

Robin Squire, the Education Minister, announced a £60,000 programme to promote after-class initiatives in 12 schools. He said that a study at London and Keele universities provided "concrete evidence" that homework helped to improve pupils' results. But the author of the report said that activities such as music and drama, sports, and societies appeared to be equally important. A comparison of seven outstanding schools with seven considered average showed consistent differences in such "curriculum enrichment", as well as in the amount of homework set.

Professor Michael Barber, the Dean of New Initiatives at the London University Institute of Education, said that a causal relationship could not be demonstrated, but that the best schools valued both homework and extra-curricular activities. Schools did not have to choose between academic excellence and a rounded education.

Professor Barber said:

"Schools that are setting more homework are also the ones where there are higher levels of participation in extra-curricular education. In both cases, pupils are spending more time productively occupied and less time watching *Neighbours* or hanging around street corners."

Mr Squire accused Labour of "insulting" teachers by insisting that they give half an hour of homework a night in primary schools and an hour and a half for secondary pupils. He said the Government would give schools the information they needed to set their own policies. "We do disagree with Labour on the importance of homework and out-of-school activities. Where we disagree is on the practicality of seeking to establish how much homework is carried out in every form."

Teaching union leaders backed the Government's stance. Nigel de Gruchy, of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said: "The Government's approach will commend itself more to the profession than the dictatorial 'we know best' approach from Tony Blair."

But Labour said there was evidence that parents wanted guidelines set for homework.

THE TIMES DILLONS FORUM

Anne Frank evening

with Janet Suzman, Terry Waite and Joely Richardson

TO CELEBRATE the publication of the definitive edition of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, readers of *The Times* are invited to an evening of readings and discussion on Wednesday, February 5, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 at 7.30pm.

Janet Suzman, Joely Richardson and Terry Waite will read from this unabridged edition of the diary, and Buddy Elias, Anne's only surviving cousin, will discuss the enduring appeal of the diary and his memories of Anne.

There will also be excerpts from Jon Blair's Oscar-winning documentary *Anne Frank Remembered*, and an opportunity for the audience to question the panel.

Tickets for the forum at £10 (concessions for OAPs, students and the unemployed) at £7.50 on production of appropriate identification, which includes £2 off the price of *The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank, the Definitive Edition* (Viking, £16); are available by phoning 0171-467 1613; by faxing the coupon below to Dillon's, 32 Gower Street, London WC1E 6EQ, where tickets can also be bought in person. A percentage of the ticket price will be donated to the Anne Frank Educational Trust.

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Hedgehogs set safety example to children

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE hedgehog, whose vulnerability to traffic is well known, yesterday became the latest animal to promote road safety to children.

Two cartoon hedgehogs lead a £500,000 five-week campaign launched by John Bowes, the Road Safety Minister. "Hedgehogs are not renowned for their road sense, and we feel this unusual approach will have great appeal to children," he said.

A 30-second cartoon depicts two hedgehogs looking for a safe place to cross. The smaller hedgehog asks: "Now?", to which the larger hedgehog replies: "Not now," as a car rushes past. Eventually they find a safe place and walk across. The use of animals began with Tuffy the squirrel in 1961, developed into Squawk the parrot in the early 1970s, and gave rise recently to Watchit, a dragon character.

Essex and Cheshire county councils said they would not use the campaign because its "twee" images would make no impression.

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



GIRLZONE
Alan Jackson on rock's female revolution in the Magazine

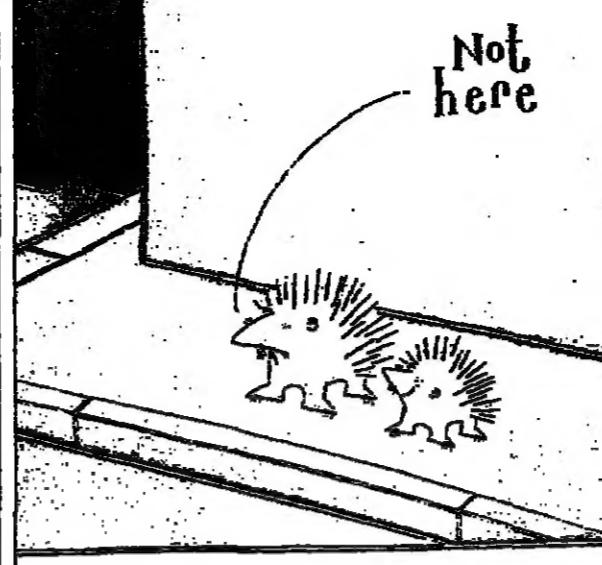
FRENCH LEAVE
Four-page travel special on Britain's favourite holiday destination in Weekend

Plus

THE DIRECTORY, CAR 97, WEEKEND MONEY and 1015 for young readers

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

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The vulnerability of hedgehogs to traffic is expected to draw children's attention to their own road safety

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Same for 1994 and every other year all the way back to 1976. And it appears 1997 will be no exception. Executive

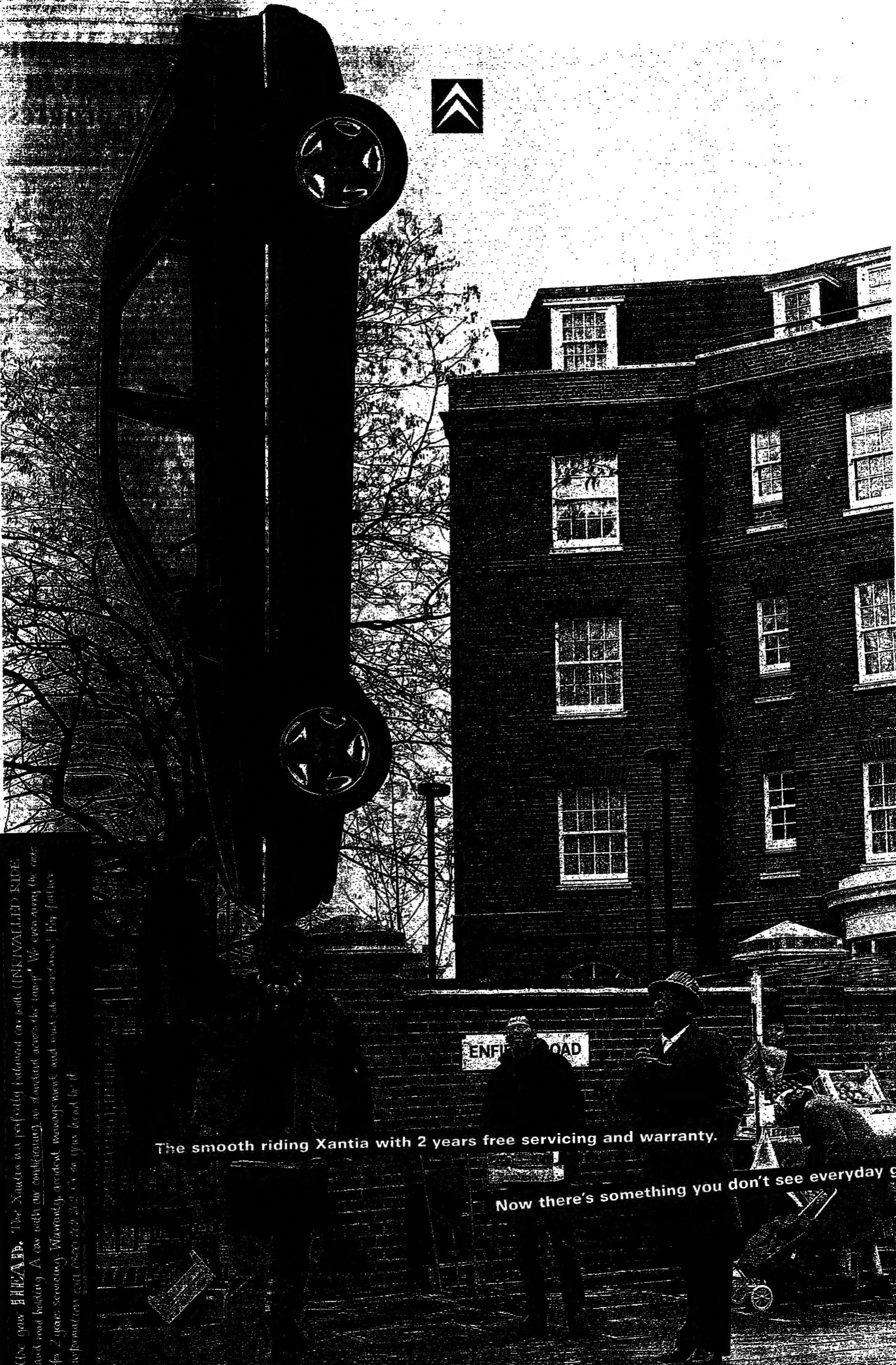
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Poll commissars award Belgrade to opposition

FROM ANTHONY LOVETT IN BELGRADE

EMBATTLED in a power struggle within his own Socialist Government in Serbia, President Milosevic's crumbling fortunes appeared further threatened yesterday when a Belgrade electoral commission recognised the opposition coalition parties had won control of the capital's vital city assembly in November's poll.

Hours later, in a second announcement, the commission also fully restored an opposition victory in Serbia's second largest city, Niš.

However, its sudden moves were met with suspicion by coalition leaders who questioned its authority, labelled the decisions a ploy and vowed to continue the mass protests that have gripped Serbia since Mr Milosevic's resounding of local election results eight weeks ago.

"The Socialists have given us a new year's present we don't believe in," said Zoran Djindjic, leader of the Democratic Party and a principal force among the Zajevo coalition triumvirate. "We want full acceptance of all the original election results. Until then there will be no trade."

Vuk Draskovic, leader of the coalition, appeared equally wary. He asked: "Is this a real decision? or a new trick to ambush the Serbian people and international community,

and buy Milosevic time in need? We must wait and see how the Socialists react to this before we can believe in it."

Either way, the commission qualified its latest announcement by saying the "preliminary" decision could be challenged by the Socialists.

President Milosevic is renowned for his "cat and mouse" skills. There is real concern among the opposition that this latest announcement is an attempt by him to dupe most protesters into leaving the streets before he smashes the remnants with force.

However, there is no doubt that the President is being forced to feel the political wind of change. The demonstration-cum-party on Monday night, the Orthodox Christian New Year's Eve, in central Belgrade was attended by perhaps half a million people. The wildest rally yet, with scenes of defiant revelry, were broadcast globally.

Those results bring control of the capital's powerful city assembly, which presides over 20 per cent of Serbia's population and crucial media and legal bodies. Yesterday, the commission's decision awarded 60 seats to the opposition coalition and 23 to the incumbent Socialist bloc among the 110 seats contested. Mr Lazarovic said that the commission would come to a decision about ten other seats within three days.

However, there was good reason to doubt the Government's apparent climbdown. Belgrade's election commission had its power to recognise the results annulled in November when President Milosevic decided that judges

Leading article, page 17

were not fit to sit. The outgoing President, Zhelev, said there would be a further "explosion" if the Socialists were given an "unconditional mandate" by his successor. "Bulgaria is the first post-communist country to fail the transition to a market economy, and it is in danger of becoming the first to fail the transition to democracy as well," Mr Zhelev said.

Mr Stoyanov, a dapper conservative lawyer elected in November, said he understood the strength of feeling which had brought tens of thousands of impoverished Bulgarians onto the streets for

the past nine days. Millions of factory workers went on strike yesterday to support the protest against the Socialists (the former Communists), who were elected in 1994 for a four-year term but have presided over a catastrophic descent towards bankruptcy.

Mr Stoyanov visited a hospital where demonstrators injured in last weekend's clashes in and around parliament had been taken. After handing out oranges from a plastic bag, he said he intended to appoint Nikolai Dobrev, the Socialist Interior Minister, as Prime Minister in succession to Zhan

Vadenov, who resigned last month. Mr Stoyanov said a Dobrev government could then negotiate a reform package with the International Monetary Fund to stabilise the currency, the lev, which has become almost worthless.

Mr Dobrev said he was prepared to negotiate a "currency board" involving a fixed exchange rate and to limit the Government's powers in order to stabilise the lev.

There was no let-up in the protest yesterday. In Sofia, demonstrators chanted "Elections now" and "Red mafia out!"



A demonstrator in front of Sofia's parliament yesterday

Saudia Arabia deports 76 girls to India

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

SEVENTY-SIX girls, some as young as six and many physically or mentally disabled, arrived in India on a flight from Saudi Arabia, leaving the authorities in Bombay perplexed yesterday.

Preliminary inquiries by police and social workers indicated that the girls, aged between six and 15, had been abandoned by their parents after being taken to Saudi Arabia from India or Bangladesh, and were deported late on

Monday after being given travel documents by the Saudi authorities. Police suspect that the girls had been taken to work as prostitutes. Charan Singh Azad, Bombay's joint police commissioner, said the girls may have been taken on the pretext of making a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

One girl sold social workers her arm had been amputated in Saudi Arabia, but did not explain why. Others were crippled by polio or had burn scars on their bodies. Poor Indian parents have been known

Bulgarian leader makes election vow to placate protesters

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN SOFIA

A POSSIBLE compromise began to emerge in the Bulgarian crisis yesterday as Petar Stoyanov, who takes over as President on Sunday, said he intended to appoint a Socialist Prime Minister as an interim measure and call early elections for June or October.

A presidential adviser appeared on television to say that "consultations on a way forward can now begin". But as the ruling Socialists began negotiations with the opposition, which has been buoyed up by

more than a week of huge street protests, Ivan Kostov, the opposition's leader, said he still wanted the Socialists to give up power immediately.

The Socialists said that they accepted "in principle" the idea of early elections in the context of the implementation of a national anti-crisis programme. Mr Kostov said this was meaningless because any interim government would need "broad social support".

Street protests have arisen with living standards in steep decline. Inflation is more than 300 per cent and the foreign debt \$10 billion (£6 billion).

Leading article, page 17

MPs start moves to impeach Yeltsin

FROM RICHARD BRESTON
IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S Communist-dominated parliament yesterday began impeachment proceedings against the ailing President Yeltsin, claiming that he can no longer perform his duties.

Viktor Ilyukhin, the head of the parliamentary security committee, who drew up the draft Bill put before the Duma (lower house), said that Mr Yeltsin would be dismissed if it were enacted. The Bill, which may be debated on Friday, calls on members to "regard the powers of the President as prematurely terminated due to his consistent incapacity to perform his duties for health reasons".

There was no indication last night that the Bill was any more likely to succeed than two similar Bills launched last year, not least because of the ambiguities of Russian law. Gennadi Seleznyov, the Communist Speaker of parliament, said he doubted that the Bill would survive its first reading because the constitution was "very hazy" on the subject of removing the head of state.

Mr Yeltsin was said last night to be feeling much better, with his temperature and blood pressure back to normal. "His condition has improved considerably, he is more physically active," the presidential press service said after doctors examined the President at the Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow, where he met Anatoli Chubais, the Kremlin Chief of Staff, for 40 minutes.



Lebed lays siege to Bonn leadership

By ROGER BOYES

ALEKSANDR LEBD, one of the most serious challengers to succeed the ailing President Yeltsin, yesterday embarked on a three-day whirlwind courtship of the Germans, setting out his credentials as a *Kremlin* leader.

On the eve of talks with politicians, industrialists and bankers, the outspoken General Lebed, 46, predicted the rapid decline and ousting of Mr Yeltsin, who has a good friendship with Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor. He said it was time for the Germans to realise the folly of putting all their bets on Mr Yeltsin — in two months at the latest even the greatest optimists would recognise the incapacity of the President to carry out his duties.

In Bavaria, he will meet Edmund Stoiber, the regional Prime Minister, whose Christian Social Union, the CDU's sister party, has shown some interest in General Lebed's fledgling Russian Republic People's Party.

To persuade the Germans of his goodwill, General Lebed is presenting a rather moderate view on Nato's eastward enlargement. He understood, he told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, that Nato was not preparing an offensive alliance.

Swiss bank gets rid of Nazi-era records

FROM PETER CAPELLA
IN ZURICH

ZURICH police are investigating why historical records from Switzerland's largest bank were thrown away by a bank historian, despite a ban on the destruction of documents that might disclose details about financial transactions with Nazi Germany.

The Union Bank of Switzerland agreed yesterday there was a clear case of negligence when the files, some dating back to 1863, were sent to be shredded.

A security guard at the bank's Zurich headquarters found them in the shredding room last week and handed the papers to a local Jewish organisation, which told the public prosecutor's office last Friday. The bank said it regretted the "mistake".

Christoph Meili, the guard, said last night what he had been suspended by the security firm that employed him. He added that he was unable to recover all the documents he had seen, but some related to business dealings with Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. A lawyer for Zurich's Jewish Community said he could be prosecuted under banking secrecy laws.

General Erismann, for the bank, said an internal inquiry found that the papers had nothing to do with dormant Jewish "Holocaust accounts".

General Erismann said yesterday that it would give Poland a list of 53 Polish Holocaust victims whose Swiss bank accounts were declared owners after the Second World War and handed to Warsaw. (Reuter)

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Inspectors to check on 'sick' Germans

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

CONTROL teams will be knocking on the doors of German civil servants who have telephoned their offices to say they are ill. Helmut Kohl's Cabinet approved the measure yesterday as part of a crackdown on high absenteeism in ministries, public institutions and schools.

Unions reacted furiously: the German Civil Servants' Federation spoke of "police methods" and Herbert Mai, head of the public services union, said it was "a totally unacceptable intrusion into personal privacy".

Forced to save money by the push for European monetary union, Manfred Kanther, the Interior Minister, has been investigating why the sickness rate for civil servants is 26 per cent higher than in private industry. Public-sector workers call in sick on more than 24 days a year and middle managers report sick on average 18 days a year. At the upper reaches of the civil service, absenteeism trails off. The overall average is 17 days a year. The figure does not include officially authorised time off for medical cures in spa resorts or occasional days taken off and not registered by the management.

The Government estimates that, if it could bring sick leave down to the level of private industry, it would save more than £200 million a year. "What's wrong with our civil servants?" the *Hamburger Abendblatt* asks. "Are they more sensitive than people in industry? Is it the hellish stress?"

The main problem area is education. In 1989, 32 per cent of teachers retired early because of illness. By 1994, Bavaria reckoned that more than 53 per cent of its teachers were taking early retirement. On average teachers, classed as civil servants in Germany, retire at the age of 53.

Industrial workers tend to report sick for physical ailments, above all back pain. Teachers, according to the Bavarian Auditors' Office suffer chiefly from psychosomatic complaints. "Teachers simply don't eat early," Otto Herz, a teachers' union executive member, said.

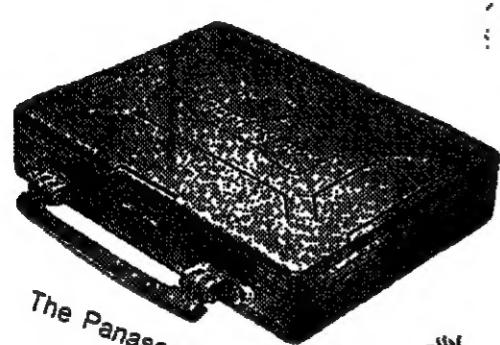
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Instructors fined for ski deaths
FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

FOUR French ski instructors have been given suspended prison sentences and ordered to pay fines totalling Fr400,000 (£45,000) and compensation by a French court after the deaths of two skiers in separate avalanche accidents last year.

The tough sentences reflecting a new determination by the judicial authorities to punish reckless skiers, were handed down on Monday, just 24 hours before another skiing fatality in the French Alps. The four had caused

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Clinton launches aid package for sick Washington

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON yesterday stepped into the growing row about the near-collapse of the American capital by proposing that the federal Government pour billions of dollars into Washington DC's roads, prisons, medical care and pensions.

In return, in a deal which would bring the District of Columbia under the control of the United States Government and mark the end of its 23-year experiment in ruling itself, the federal Government would collect the city's taxes and abolish the annual federal subsidy.

The plans represent a sharp switch by the White House, which before Christmas looked frostily on the suggestion by an independent board that it should help to save Washington from squalor and decay.

Mr Clinton has faced growing local criticism and, it is reported, pressure from his wife, Hillary. His aides say he is now convinced that the capital, as a national asset, should be run by the Government.

The core of the problem is that the city's population, which is 80 per cent black, is too poor and pays too little in taxes to support basic infrastructure and services, let alone the national monuments which attract millions of visitors each year. As crime and poverty have spread and schools have deteriorated, businesses and affluent residents have fled to the suburbs, shrinking the city's revenues.

New figures yesterday showed that the city's infant death rate, for decades among the worst in the country, had improved, partly because fewer poor women were using drugs during pregnancy. However, Washington infants still die at more than twice the

rate of those nationwide. Washington won control of its finances and management in 1974, in response to protests that a predominantly black city should not be run by white government officials. Under the deal, Congress each year approves the city's budget — about \$5 billion (£3 billion) — and its federal subsidy, currently about \$660 million.

But self-rule has never worked smoothly. Clinton administration officials yesterday put some blame for the city's plight on local government. Marion Barry, the Mayor, imprisoned for crack possession after three terms in office but subsequently re-elected, has regularly been attacked for inefficiency.

However, White House officials also argue that the burden placed on the city in 1974 was too great. Mr Barry, who agrees, says that Mr Clinton's proposals are "heading in the right direction", even though they could shrink his authority.

According to the plans, the Internal Revenue Service would collect the city's income taxes. In return, the federal Government would pay for Washington's \$5 billion shortfall in pensions and pay more towards medical care. It would pay for prisons and courts, to be managed by the Justice Department, and inject \$1.4 billion into repairing bridges and roads.

Mr Clinton's plans need the approval of the Republican-controlled Congress, which could give the Administration a rough ride. Congressmen and senators have traditionally been reluctant to be seen to be giving more cash to Washington, fearing that it could lose their votes at home. Members of both parties are worried about giving the District more money before the city makes cutbacks and management reforms which Congress has already demanded.

□ UN debts: President Clinton will ask Congress to allocate \$1 billion to pay America's debts to the United Nations. However, the Administration plans to hold back the money until the financially troubled world body makes reforms.

Homeless men sit on a steam grate to keep warm in front of the Washington Monument

Judges to debate presidential sex case options

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE nine judges of the US Supreme Court, troubled by the lack of legal precedent, meet privately today to decide whether President Clinton, in office, should stand trial for sexual harassment.

After an hour of legal argument on Monday, the arbiters of the American Constitution may now be forced to issue a bold policy judgment that could affect occupants of the Oval Office for generations to come. They are clearly daunted by the weight of the decision and, although no opinion is required until June, the justices appeared yesterday to be seeking some form of middle ground that would both respect the office of the presidency and the needs of the individual.

Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, is alleging that in 1991 she was led by a state trooper to meet Mr Clinton, then the Governor, in his Little Rock hotel room. She says Mr Clinton then asked her to perform oral sex. The President has denied Ms Jones's accusation.

The harsh questioning this week by the judges of the lawyers representing Mr Clinton and Ms Jones suggested that the Supreme Court is worried about the adoption of either extreme position: total immunity for the President or none.

Precedents have failed to help the court. In the 1982 case *Nixon v Fitzgerald*, it was decided that an American president had immunity from

such an approach were to be adopted, it could prove politically damaging for Mr Clinton. Ms Jones's lawyers, who have been barred since 1994 from taking any depositions or undertaking any other "discovery" elements of the case, are eager to record evidence from witnesses who were in the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock on the day in question.

The telephone conversation, recorded last month, shows the Speaker working behind the scenes to secure a pact with fellow Republicans to spare him a full-scale public trial for ethical misconduct. The ethics committee is investigating whether he misused tax-exempt charitable donations for political purposes.

Leading article, page 17

Democrats mishandle Gingrich tape 'plot'

BY TOM RHODES

ATTEMPTS to demonise Newt Gingrich became a tactical disaster last night after a telephone recording of the House Speaker, obtained by a Democrat, was referred to the Justice Department.

Alice and John Martin, two active Florida Democrats who have admitted making the tape, said they had given the recording to Jim McDermott, a senior-ranking Democrat on the ethics committee investigating the Speaker.

Although there is no suggestion that Mr McDermott shared the recording with panel colleagues, it was leaked anonymously to two large-circulation newspapers. Republicans claim Mr McDermott was responsible.

Mr McDermott then gave the recording to his committee, but the Republicans refused to receive it, passing it to the Justice Department. Mr McDermott last night said it was absurd to consider prosecuting those who made the tape in good faith, but Republicans could hardly conceal their glee that Democrats had risked committing a crime to destroy Mr Gingrich.

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Leading article, page 17

Sushi sales boom as Peruvians cash in on siege

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI
IN LIMA

THE month-long hostage siege of the Japanese Ambassador's residence in a leafy Lima suburb has sent property and hotel prices soaring, and triggered a lucrative trade in takeaway sushi for cameras camped at the scene.

Japanese television networks and other international media have taken up almost every room in top hotels in San Isidro to be near the besieged mansion, and paid large sums to set up their offices in neighbourhood homes. One television network is said to be paying \$50,000 a week (£30,000) rent for a thirteenth-floor flat overlooking the compound in which Marxist rebels are still

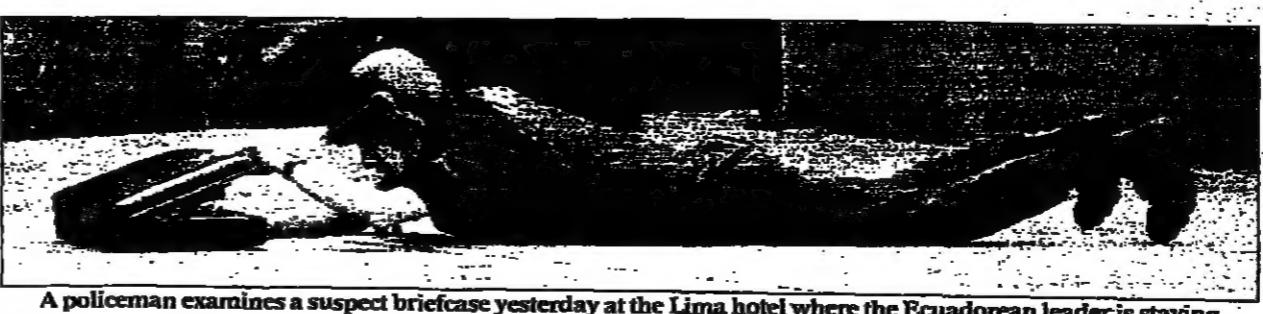
holding 74 hostages, including top Peruvian officials, the Japanese Ambassador, and 20 Japanese executives. The siege entered its fifth week yesterday with no end yet in sight. But security around the residence was visibly tighter with a visit by President Bucaram, the first

TV crew have it because they are paying so much," said the owner of a house behind the ambassador's home.

Journalists have meanwhile moved into colonial houses in the diplomatic district. "We have decided to move out from our home and let a Japanese

photographer and cameraman, is even building an extra floor to house more journalists. "This siege has kept occupancy rates up like never before in Lima," said one.

One of Lima's top Japanese restaurants is running a round-the-clock sushi and sa-



shimi delivery service to Japanese photographers awaiting news developments along roads leading to the residence.

La Bonbonniere, a small French-style cafe which used to be an afternoon meeting place for rich elderly ladies, now provides lunch and menus in Japanese to hundreds of cellular phone-wielding reporters.

Contrary to early predictions, tourism has not suffered and tour companies are running coach trips to the environs of the rebel-held building before flying visitors to the Inca ruins at Macchu Picchu.

One air-conditioned bus

arrived with dozens of Japanese tourists who wanted to have their pictures taken next to heavily armed police and television cameramen.

50



Steve Fossett takes off from St Louis on his second attempt to fly round the world

Solo balloonist takes on the world after a cold start

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AN AMERICAN balloonist had a frosty start yesterday after taking off in an attempt to become the first person to fly solo round the world non-stop. One of two heaters aboard Steve Fossett's *Solo Spirit* refused to work.

Mr Fossett, 52, a multimillionaire commodities dealer from Colorado, reported the heater problem as *Solo Spirit* was at 18,000ft over North Carolina, shortly before reaching the Atlantic coast.

"We've committed now to crossing the Atlantic, but the heater is certainly a worry," said Bo Kemper, his project manager. Temperatures on the trip are expected to fall to -56°C (-69°F).

The attempt to fly round the world comes after two unsuccessful missions by other balloonists this month. They were not solo.

One of his rivals, Richard Branson, the British entrepreneur, travelled to St Louis, Missouri, to wish Mr Fossett good luck as he started his voyage on Monday night.



Fossett: "A lot of people may be jealous of me"

This is one of the bravest things I have ever seen a man do," said Mr Branson. "If anyone can do it, I suspect Steve can."

Although physically unassuming, Mr Fossett has much of Phileas Fogg or the Montgolfier Brothers about him: he is making his circumnavigation attempt with the minimum of equipment, in a capsule which is smaller and

less sophisticated than those of Mr Branson and the Swiss team which last week came to grief soon after the start of their attempt.

Apart from the sole heater, he will be protected from the cold in his cramped, Plexiglass-roofed bubble capsule by a couple of layers of warm clothing, with a few changes of small. Oxygen supplies will help him to survive the altitude.

For food he has taken a modest supply of MREs (US Army-style meals ready to eat), which gastronomically leave something to be desired, and as much manpower as he could accommodate in containers. His latrine for the next 18 days will be a humble bucket. Will it be emptied over the side of the capsule? "I'd prefer not to say," said Mr Kemper yesterday from mission headquarters in Chicago.

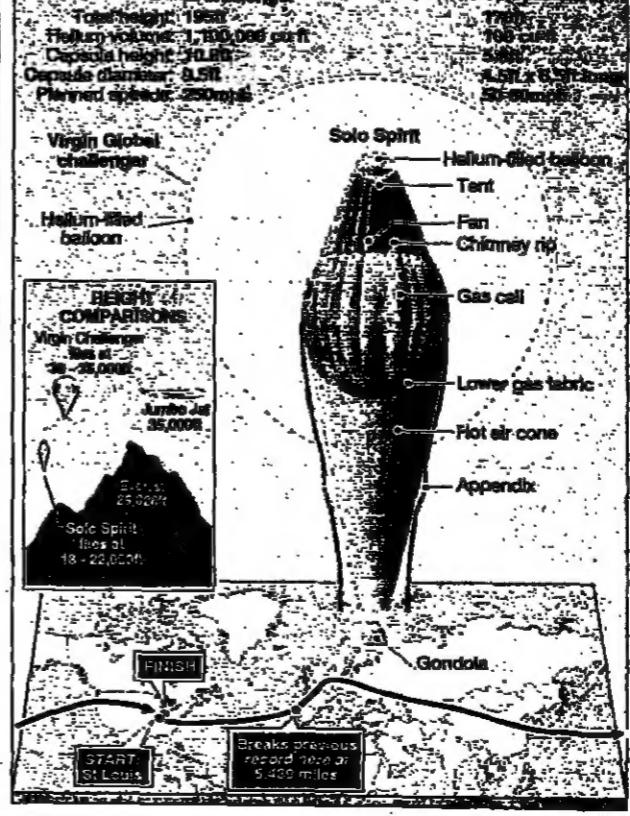
At 3pm London time yesterday, *Solo Spirit* was floating at 47 knots over Winston-Salem, North Carolina, a couple of hours or so behind schedule. Weather forecasters predicted a freshening of winds which could increase the balloon's speed.

It is expected to arrive over Europe on the northern coast of Portugal, before swinging north over Denmark. If wind directions change, it is possible *Solo Spirit* will float further to the north, possibly even over Britain. Its scheduled path will take it over Russia and China before its planned return to America and a landing in Illinois.

Mr Fossett is keeping in contact with his wife, Peggy, who is not a keen balloonist — and his team managers by a satellite-assisted fax machine and computer e-mail.

Shortly before *Solo Spirit* took off from the Busch stadium in St Louis, Mr Fossett was asked if people might not consider him a lunatic to attempt such an adventure. "I'm not sure about that," he replied. "I reckon there's a whole lot of people out there who may be jealous of me having this chance."

It is his second tilt at global circumnavigation. Last year he made it from South Dakota to the Atlantic coast of Canada before technical problems forced him to crash-land.



Medicine to settle deal on

Medicines rushed to settlers before deal on Hebron

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI troops, fearing violence, rusted emergency medical supplies to the three Jewish-settler enclaves in the heart of Hebron as negotiations to secure a deal handing over four-fifths of the city to the Palestinian Authority continued late last night.

Speaking hours before a planned meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to try again to settle the pullout deal, David Wilder, spokesman for the 450 Jews who live among 120,000 Palestinians, said the new supplies indicated Israeli government fears that they are "leaving Jews in jeopardy."

In an interview with Israel radio broadcast shortly before Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, were due to meet at the Erez crossing-point between Israel and Gaza, Mr Wilder said: "It seems that they [the Israeli authorities] are afraid that something like this might occur and also that one neighbourhood may be separated from the others and it may be difficult to reach them with emergency equipment."

The eleven-hour distribution of the supplies added to the atmosphere of crisis in a city that is holy to Jews and Muslims and has a history of intercommunal violence. In 1929, 67 Jews were massacred by Arabs and the rest of the then Jewish community fled to Jerusalem.

Voicing the anger and frustration felt by many of the hardline Jews who live in three main settlement areas that are check-by-fowl with

Palestinian residents of the city, Mr Wilder added: "I find it absurd to find ourselves in what is an era of peace where emergency medical supplies have not been distributed throughout Hebron."

It means they [the right-wing Israeli Government] cannot assure us of our safety. Yesterday Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, said very, very clearly that they cannot assure us of our safety in Hebron. I do not understand how an Israeli Government can withdraw knowing that they are leaving Jews in jeopardy."

Equal misgivings about potential violence were voiced by leading Hebron Palestinians who fear that armed Jewish settlers or their supporters may go on the rampage in a last-ditch attempt to scupper any deal to implement the long-delayed evacuation of Israeli troops.

As right-wing Jews contin-

Libya relents on desert exiles

Tunis: Libya reversed course yesterday, saying Palestinians stranded on the Egypt-Libya border could return to Libya. Hundreds have been stuck in the desert since September 1995 when Colonel Muammar Gaddafi ordered thousands home in a campaign against Palestinian-Israeli peace accords. Israel controls access to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing in only residents. (Reuters)

Sudan set to fight 'holy war' after raids

By MARK HENDERSON

SUDAN called for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council yesterday as President al-Bashir's Islamic Government appealed to the people to fight a holy war against what it says are Ethiopian attacks.

Khartoum University was closed to allow students to join a full mobilisation of the army, announced at a rally in the capital. Ethiopia has denied any involvement in the fighting in Blue Nile province of eastern Sudan, where mainly Christian Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels have captured the town of Kurmuk and three military bases. The rebels are threatening to overrun Damazin, which controls 80 per cent of Khartoum's water supply.

More than 50,000 civilians have already been forced to flee their homes in eastern Sudan by a scorched-earth policy adopted by government forces, according to Westerners who have made a secret visit to the area. The Sudanese Army began bombing and burning villages in the Blue Nile and Upper Nile regions in March last year to counter an SPLA offensive. More than 5,000 refugees have fled to Ethiopia, and many more are sheltering behind the lines of the SPLA, which controls much of the Christian and animist south.

"The devastation in eastern Sudan is unbelievable," Baroness Cox, who visited the area with the charity Christian Solidarity International last week, said yesterday. "You can walk from one burnt-out village to another for four hours on end."

Government forces have burnt crops and food stores and threatened aid agencies if they try to operate in the region. Hundreds of civilians, mainly children, have already died of starvation and disease, in addition to those killed in the attacks.

The SPLA, led by John Garang, has been fighting the Government since 1983 in a civil war in which 1.3 million people have died.

Pretoria risks aid cutoff over Syrian arms sale

By R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG AND TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

South Africa's apparent willingness thus to affect the delicate Middle East military balance is "unwelcome" enough to America and Israel, but it is the fact that Syria features prominently on the US list of countries sponsoring state terrorism that has roused particular American wrath.

Professor Kader Asmal, the minister who chairs the South African Cabinet's Conventional Arms Committee, has vainly tried to insist that the master is "not in the public domain", but it is known that the Asmal committee has accepted the deal on condition that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki agrees. That puts Mr Mbeki in a difficult position, for he is bound to come under fierce pressure from Israel and America to stop the deal.

Then, to many within the ANC, the issue is one of national independence and the retention of links with radical regimes that supported the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.

Although the South African Cabinet is not due to confirm or reject the sale before its meeting next week, it is difficult to see how either decision can be taken without a humiliating climbdown on the one hand or, on the other, a collision with America, Israel and South Africa's Jews. Pre-

summing, it is apparent that the US, on its economic assistance to South Africa, if it goes ahead with a planned arms sale to Syria, the US State Department said yesterday that American law prevented recipients of aid from selling arms to countries such as Syria, that had been identified as supporting international terrorism.

It would be extremely serious if these sales occurred," Nicholas Burns, the department spokesman, said. "The United States hopes that the South African Government will not consummate arms sales to a country that supports terrorism."

Under the deal, yet to be settled, Pretoria would sell \$400 million worth of tank-fire-control systems that would enable Syria to upgrade its 1,500 T-72 tanks, giving them night-vision and combat capability at least on a par with their Israeli counterparts.

South Africa's ties with Iran, Cuba and Libya have drawn unfavourable American comment, as has an oil deal with Iraq and a previous delivery of arms to Iraq; indeed, America is still operating arms sanctions against



Froodual Karamira, left, listening as charges of genocide are read in a Kigali court yesterday

Top suspect in genocide trial

Kigali: Rwanda yesterday put on trial a prominent politician accused of being a ringleader of the 1994 genocide of minority Tutsis master-minded by Hutu extremists.

Although an ethnic Tutsi by birth, Froodual Karamira became a member of the Hutu tribe under a Rwandan custom. He was a vice-president of the extremist MDR-Power party under the ousted President Pasteur Bizimungu. He was arrested in 1994 and charged with inciting genocide through broadcasts on state-run radio. His lawyer was granted an adjournment of 15 days as he had never met his client before. Similar trials have begun in Arusha, Tanzania. (Reuters)

South Korea faces more strikes

From ROBERT WHYMANT

IN TOKYO

SOUTH Korean workers responded half-heartedly to a call for an all-out stoppage yesterday, but union leaders pledged to continue protests and industrial action until the Government repealed a con-

troversial labour law. Buses and underground trains ran normally in the capital, Seoul, and banks opened. The only disruption was caused by most taxis being on strike.

Several thousand employees of banks and stockbrokers waited until lunch to join a rally against the legislation,

which makes it easier for companies to lay off workers and imposes longer hours.

The outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said its 500,000 members would begin an indefinite strike today. Transport and telecommunications workers also threaten to strike.



AP/SEA WORLD

Fattening a lost 1,710lb baby

By GILES WHITTELL
IN SAN DIEGO

A stranded newborn grey whale that was found off southern California is fed by Sea World staff at San Diego (Giles Whittell writes). Thought to be the youngest whale yet rescued, it has gained 50lb thanks to a two-gallon mixture of milk and puréed squid and clam fed to it by funnel and pipe eight times a day.

It was still trailing part of its umbilical cord when found alone at

the weekend by Venice Beach - better known for its narcissistic body-builders. Lethargic, dehydrated and barely conscious, it was manoeuvred into a lorry and taken to a 40ft tank at the theme park. Already 13ft and weighing 1,710lb, it has caught the

attention of the public and local media as it appears only whales can migrate in large, undisturbed pods from the Bering Sea to the Mexican Pacific every winter.

Within a year the whale should have outgrown every tank in the theme park, having put on up to 9 tonnes. Then it must be returned to the sea.

Disney damps down frontal assault at Splash Mountain

From GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

EMBARRASSED officials at Disneyland are cracking down on women who expose their breasts for the cameras on one of the theme park rides. The officials have also launched an investigation to

find an employee thought to have published such pictures on the Internet.

A digital camera automatically takes souvenir snaps of every boatload of visitors on the final 50ft plunge of the Splash Mountain flume - a thrill that induces some flutters to raise their shirts.

Last summer the theme park sought to curb the practice by stopping the ride when bare chests were spotted and broadcasting a pre-recorded message: "Please put your shirts back on. It's very unappealing and frankly it's making me sick."

Souvenir photographs are

screened by Disneyland before being offered to visitors, but the company that prides itself on purveying only pure family fun has failed to prevent images of toplessness on Splash Mountain from appearing in cyberspace.

An internal investigation launched last year has turned

up no culprits, but security has been tightened in the picture-taking booth. "This is obviously something we can't condone," a Disney spokesman said.

Meanwhile a former employee calling himself Doug is corresponding on a remote backwater of the Internet.

WORLD SUMMARY

38 killed as bus plunges into mud

Cairo: Thirty-eight passengers died and at least 29 were hurt yesterday when a public transport bus plummeted off a bridge here and landed upside down on the muddy bank of the River Nile.

Police said the bus slipped over several times as it fell from the Sahel bridge in the poor Cairo district of Rod al-Faraq. Many victims died of suffocation or were crushed.

In Ivory Coast, 21 people died when a bus spun out of control and hit a tree near Gagnons, northwest of Abidjan, the capital. In South Africa, at least 68 people were injured when a bus overturned in the black township of Boishabelo, east of Bloemfontein. (Reuters, AFP)

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"The attempt to portray prisons as holiday camps is not borne out by my experience," says Douglas Hurd

I am not afraid of being called liberal

Douglas Hurd wants to reform prison. Interview by Robert Crampton

So. Douglas Hurd is to become the chairman of the Prison Reform Trust. Even the man who asked him to do the job, Stephen Shaw, the PRT's director, admits it is a "remarkable decision". I have been dispatched to the ninth floor of the NatWest building in the City to ask Mr Hurd why he made it.

As the express lift whooshes me on my way, I review the subject of the interview: the PRT is a small liberal pressure group which campaigns for fewer people to be sent to prison and for better, more enlightened treatment of those who are there. Douglas Hurd is a former Tory Home Secretary and, until the forthcoming election, a Conservative MP. As Home Secretary, 1985-89, he set in train the 1991 Criminal Justice Act, the aim of which was to find ways of punishing less serious offenders without putting them in prison. The present Tory Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is in favour of putting more people in prison. He, famously, thinks that "prison works".

The lift bears me into a plush foyer. Mr Hurd, I am told, is making a couple of calls. I sit and wait and continue my revision. Under Mr Howard's latest proposals for mandatory terms for repeat offenders — the Crimes (Sentences) Bill, currently proceeding through Parliament — the prison population is expected to increase from 88,500 to some 73,000 over the next 15 years. During the debate on the second reading of the Bill, Mr Hurd — along with several other notable Tories — warned the House of the effect of this increase on the possibility of effective rehabilitation. He said: "It is possible that our prisons will turn out more accomplished criminals, and that the purpose of the Bill will, in the medium and long term, be frustrated."

And now we meet, and I shake one of what were always reputed to be the safest hands in British government. The hand extends from the sleeve of a formal suit worn with a more expressive tie than it might have been during Mr Hurd's ten years as first Home then Foreign Secretary. Mr Hurd has a long body topped off with a long, narrow head, made even longer by his white quiff. We stand awkwardly at the window. After a bit of chat about the view we get down to business.

Mr Hurd will take over as chairman of the trust in November. The retiring chairman is Jon Snow,

the newsreader. Was Mr Hurd surprised to be asked to succeed him? "I was rather, yes, I was rather. But the PRT is all-party, Conservatives were among those who urged me most strongly to accept. It is not a body that is in confrontation with the Home Office or the Prison Service."

He chooses his words carefully. The PRT is certainly not in confrontation with either the prison governors or the civil servants at the Home Office. The Home Secretary, however, is another matter. Jon Snow, in his report for 1995-96, says this: "PRT may fundamentally disagree with the Home Secretary's assertion that 'Prison Works'." I say to Mr Hurd: "The PRT may be all-party, but if you look at its trustees — Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, Edward Fitzgerald, QC, Silvia Casale, Trevor Phillips — it is obviously a liberalish body, isn't it?" With a small I, yes, with a small I, he says. "But it is a broad church. I have my own views. It's not as if the PRT has a three-line whip."

Mr Hurd then, very politely, grabs hold of the interview for quite a while. He says: "Prison has four main purposes", and proceeds to list them. They are punishment, deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation. His main point is this: "If you send more people to prison you remove people from the streets, fine. There is an important short-term gain for public safety. But after a time, they come out again. You lock more people away, eventually you let more people out. What sort of people are they?

"It wasn't me, it was my successor as Home Secretary that said in his White Paper that prison could be an expensive way of making bad people worse. I suppose it was David Waddington, so it wasn't my phrase, but it could be so. What happens in prison does affect very much whether, quotes, 'Prison

Works' or not." He thinks that prisons have improved substantially since he was in charge of them — no more slopping out, no more three in a cell, no more prisoners held in police stations. I ask him if he was routinely shocked, visiting prisons ten years ago. "No, I wasn't." I ask him what emotional impact they had as places that have now drawn him back. "I think 60,000 people is a lot of people ... It's a neglected problem, a forgotten subject. I've worked with three

Prime Ministers quite closely. I can't remember a Prime Minister ever going near a prison. The Princess Royal does, or has done. I don't know that other royals do.

We talk more about the Crime (Sentences) Bill, which the Government is desperate to pass before the dissolution. I say that it is a strange state of affairs when Douglas Hurd and Kenneth Baker form the opposition to a government measure. "Well, I did point this out," he says. "There ought to be a discussion about these things ... I'm not afraid of being called a liberal with a small I on these matters. I've always been against capital punishment. The attempt to portray prisons as holiday camps is not borne out by my experience. Someone commits suicide in prison once every five days. That's a funny sort of holiday camp."

That is quite animated for Mr Hurd. Encouraged, I have another go at getting him to have a go at Michael Howard. I point out that he was a Home Secretary who wanted numbers reduced. Mr Howard wants them increased, even at an estimated cost of £3 billion for 12 new prisons. "Yes and he's entitled to, every Home Secretary is right to be discontented with what he finds, because crime and the fear of crime is such an evil. He has to have regard to numbers. Michael Howard believes — and I expect he's right — that he can manage. I had an actual crisis of numbers. He has a more manage-

able problem and therefore he can take these measures in a way which simply wasn't open." But you wouldn't have approved of filling the prisons even if they hadn't already been full? "I'm not sure about that because, you know, life's moved on since 87-88."

Will you be voting for the Crime (Sentences) Bill? "I voted for the second reading. What about when it comes back for its final reading? He says: "I think, er, er, er, I expect so, but I think the Home Secretary always needs to listen carefully to points made. I'm weighing my words because it hasn't got to the Lords yet. Obviously there will be points made in the Lords which he will need to listen to. What points? "I don't know yet." Have you ever voted against the Government? "No, I have not." It would be a difficult thing for you to do? "Of course it would and at the moment I have no intention of doing so but I did say on second reading it will need careful scrutiny." What if the Bill comes back unamended? "I don't know the answer to that."

We talk about the Dutch auction taking place between the political parties on crime policy. Mr Hurd is at his most imperious: "I've never thought that criminal justice measures which were simply as a result of a calculation about votes were likely to be very effective. I don't know what they're doing. I've not discussed it with Jack Straw. I think it would be a great mistake if what happens in prisons gets left out simply because it's distasteful. I don't think that I'm a sofie on crime. I'm now in a position when I don't have to worry if the vindictive tendency in some newspapers [and some members of his own party] take it out on me. I don't have to worry about that anymore."

MEDIA

• **Violent media**
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SECTION 2, page 33

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In the third extract from Anne Frank's unexpurgated diary, she describes problems with her mother

A daughter's growing pains

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1942

They were all so nice to me a month ago - because of my birthday, and yet every day I feel myself drifting further away from Mother and Margot. I worked hard today and they praised me, only to start picking on me again five minutes later.

I don't fit in with them, and I've felt that clearly in the last few weeks. They're always saying how nice it is with the *four of us*, and that we get along so well, without giving a moment's thought to the fact that I don't feel that way.

COMMENT ADDED BY ANNE IN SEPTEMBER 1942 Daddy's always so nice. He understands me perfectly, and I wish we could have a heart-to-heart talk sometime without my bursting instantly into tears. But apparently that has to do with my age.

FRIDAY

AUGUST 21, 1942
Mummy gave me another one of her dreadful sermons this morning. We take the opposite view on everything. Daddy's a sweetheart; he may get cross with me, but it never lasts longer than five minutes.

THURSDAY

OCTOBER 1, 1942
I have a terrible pain in my index finger (on my left hand), so I can't do any ironing. What luck!

Mr van Daan wants me to sit next to him at the table, since Margot doesn't eat enough to suit him. That's all right with me, I welcome the change. Now Margot will have to bear the brunt of Mummy's carpings. Or rather, won't, since Mother doesn't make such sarcastic remarks to her. Not to that paragon of virtue! I'm always teasing Margot about being a paragon of virtue these days, and she hates it. Maybe it'll teach her not to be such a goody-goody. High time she learns!

To end this hedgehog of news, a particularly amusing joke told by Mr van Daan. What goes click-clack times and clack once? A centipede with a club foot.

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 3, 1942
Everybody teased me quite a bit yesterday because I lay down on the bed next to Mr van Daan. "At your age! Shocking!" and other remarks along those lines. Silly, of course. I'd never want to sleep with Mr van Daan the way they mean.

Yesterday Mother and I had another run-in and she really kicked up a fuss. She told Daddy all my sins and started to cry, which made me cry, too, and I already had such an awful headache. I finally told



Anne Frank, left, posing with her father, whom she adored, and elder sister Margot, whom she later resented.

Daddy that I love him more than I do Mother, to which he replied that it was just a passing phase, but I don't think so. I simply can't stand Mother, and I have to force myself not to snap at her all the time, and to stay calm, when I'd rather snap her across the face. I don't know why I've taken such a terrible dislike to her. Daddy says that if Mother isn't feeling well or has a headache, I should volunteer to help her, but I'm not going to because I don't love her and don't enjoy doing it. I can imagine Mother dying some day, but Daddy's death seems inconceivable. It's very mean of me, but that's how I feel. I hope Mother will never read this or anything else I've written.

I've been allowed to read more grown-up books lately. *Eva's Youth* by Nico van Sodtelen is currently keeping me busy. I don't think there's much of a difference between this and the books for teenage girls. Eva thought that children grew on trees, like apples, and that the stork plucked them off the tree when they were ripe and

brought them to the mothers. But her girlfriend's cat had kittens and Eva saw them coming out of the cat, so she thought cats laid eggs and hatched them like chickens, and that mothers who wanted a child also went upstairs a few days before their time to lay an egg and brood on it. After the babies arrived, the mothers were pretty weak from all that squatting. At some point, Eva wanted a baby, too. She took a woollen scarf and spread it on the ground so the egg could fall into it, and then she squatted down and began to push. She clucked as she waited, but no egg came out. Finally, after she'd been sitting for a long time, something did come, but it was a sausage instead of an egg. Eva was embarrassed. She thought she was ill. Funny, isn't it? There are also parts of *Eva's Youth* that talk about women selling their bodies on the street and asking loads of money. I'd be mortified in front of a man like that. In addition, it mentions Eva's menstruation. Oh, I long to have my period — then I'll really be grown up.

Daddy is grumbling again and threatening to take away my diary. Oh, horror of horrors! From now on I'm going to hide it.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 1942
I had an awful headache yesterday and went to bed early. Margot's being exasperating again.

PS: I forgot to mention the important news that I'm probably going to have my period soon. I can tell because I keep finding a whitish smear in my panties, and Mother predicted it would start soon. I can hardly wait. It's such a momentous event. Too bad I can't use sanitary towels, but you can't get them any more, and Mummy's tampons can be used only by women who've had a baby.

COMMENT BY ANNE ON JANUARY 22, 1944
Now that I'm rereading my diary after a year and a half, I'm surprised at my childish innocence. Deep down I know I could never be that innocent again, however much I'd like to be. I can understand the mood changes and the comments about Margot, Mother and Father as if I'd written them only yesterday, but I can't imagine writing so openly about other matters. It embarrasses me greatly to read the pages dealing with subjects that I remembered as being nicer than they actually were. My descriptions are so indecise. But enough of that.

The whole time I've been here I've longed unconsciously — and at times consciously — for trust, love and physical affection. This longing may change in intensity, but it's always there.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1943

I'm seething with rage, yet I can't show it. I'd like to scream, stamp my foot, give Mother a good shaking, cry and I don't know what else because of the nasty words, mocking looks and accusations that she hurls at me day after day, piercing me like

Dit is een foto, zoals

ik me zou wensen,

altijd zo te zijn.

Dan had ik nog wel

een kans om naar

Hollywood te komen.

Anne Frank.

10 Oct. 1942

(translation)
"This is a photo as I would wish myself to look all the time. Then I would maybe have a chance to move to Hollywood."

Anne Frank, 10 Oct. 1942



lying around again. You never put that away either!"

I said I hadn't used it, and Margot backed me up, since she was the guilty party.

Mother went on talking about how messy I was until I got fed up and said, rather curtly: "I wasn't even the one who said you were careless. I'm always getting blamed for other people's mistakes!"

Mother fell silent, and less than a minute later I was obliged to kiss her goodnight. This incident may not have been very important, but these days everything gets on my nerves.

* Oh, you are cruel.

● Taken from *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, edited by Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, to be published by Viking on February 6, price £16. ©The Anne Frank Fonds, Basel, Switzerland 1991. English translation by Susan Massott ©Doubleday 1995.

TOMORROW

Mr Dussel, a dentist, joins the Franks in hiding with dismal news from outside

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A strong line on spring



Feminine frills and bold stripes are the catwalk directions to follow this summer, says Style Editor Grace Bradberry

The wise fashion shopper will already be thinking about what to buy for this spring. After one of the coldest winter spells on record, this may seem foolish, but in fact it will be only a matter of days before the new season's collections begin appearing on shop rails. It's often easier to make an early decision as high fashion stores often sell out of desirable items quickly. There's nothing worse than finding half a suit, or the perfect sweater in the wrong colour.

Over the past few years, the catwalk influence on high street fashion has grown increasingly strong. This season is no different. So even if you won't be spending £300 on a top, it helps to know what's going on.

Paradoxically, it has rarely been more difficult to divine the future of fashion from the bi-annual fashion shows. Hemlines no longer rise and fall together, and the stylists who put the catwalk look together are concerned increasingly with creating headlines rather than wearable outfits. As a result,

some of the "looks" that emerge are fads rather than genuine fashions. Others, although intended to be taken seriously, were surely designed in Hades.

Into this last category comes diaphanous — see-through to the rest of us — which was the big story from the spring-summer shows. Mindful no doubt of the old Dorothy Perkins slogan — "we've lined it so you'll like it" — many of the designers thoughtfully added a peekaboo before sending the dresses over to England. Those with patterns are preferable, as they distract attention from the lumps and bumps that are all too visible when you're effectively wearing a nightie.

In response to the confusing mix of styles, the women who buy high fashion have begun focusing on a few cult items from specific designers. Likely contenders for summer include Prada's colonial shirt with military-style pockets and deep collar, Gucci's skimpy crochet top and Dolce & Gabbana's diamond-hole crocheted cardie.

Other outfits that are likely to



attract plenty of magazine coverage, but are less likely to find their way into people's wardrobes, include John Galliano's floral print slip-dresses, Dolce & Gabbana's floral print coats, and Blumarine's striped off-the-shoulder top.

For those of us who won't be spending several hundred pounds on a cardigan this summer, these images will do one important

thing: define the season's mood. More accurately, there are several different moods, although two particular directions are making the strongest impact. One is towards eccentric femininity — plenty of frills and flowers, but with a bit of attitude thrown in. The other is towards strong lines — stripes, asymmetrical necklines, vertiginous V-necks, handkerchief hems.

Of the two, British women will feel safest with the harsh symmetries. By and large we recoil from anything overtly feminine and ruffled, and the danger with fru-fru is that it can turn all but androgynous six-footers into wobbling blanmanges.

Thankfully, there are designers who understand this. The Dublin-based John Rocha, for example,



Far Left:
Sea print ruffle skirt, £390. Net T-shirt, £104, and crochet bikini top, £365, all by John Rocha at Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Tel: 0171-734 0123.

Left:
Chevron T-shirt, £26 by Jigsaw, 126-127 New Bond Street, London W1. Tel: 0171-491 4484.

Above:
Spaghetti-strap dress, £164 by Betty Jackson, 311 Brompton Road, London SW3. Tel: 0171-589 7884.
Lofia sofa, £1,250, Aero, 96 Westbourne Grove, London W2. Tel: 0171-221 1950.

Photographer: PAUL MASSEY
Fashion Assistant: Deborah Brett. Hair and make-up: Carol Hart for Mary Quant. Model: Clare Wilson at Models One.

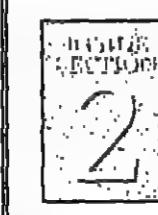
The strong lines are emphasised by pattern, but softened by colours that are just a bit "off". Blue is dominant, with every shade from ice to navy featured in the designers' catwalk shows. Brown remains strong, although winter's chocolate shades have given way to more subdued tones.

If you buy only one thing for this spring, let it be a trouser suit. Every designer featured at least one in their collection. The best had flat-fronted trousers, cut either straight and narrow, or wide-legged. While some designers are still giving skirts and trousers low waists to elongate the torso, others have gone for a surprisingly high-waisted look, emphasising the skinneiness of tops and jackets.

The single-button tuxedo was the inspiration for many jackets. The Italian designer Anna Molinari cut hers straight and cropped it at the hipbone. Nicole Farhi's plaid suit was a similar length. Both are cut close across the chest, creating a strong V-shape.

So much for the wearable, now for the unwearable. Or rather, the things that appear too dreadful for words, but which may yet take off. This year's "fun fashions" are pedal-pushers and boob-tubes. Fun for whom is a moot point.

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How to spend \$10 million and produce a Broadway flop. The expensive art of making musicals, page 34

Danger: you will never be the same again

Jane Shilling on the thrill of the Manolo Blahnik sale

Fifteen years ago this week, on a bitter cold morning, I got up early, left the dark Chelsea basement where I was living at the time, and walked down the road to Old Church Street, where I joined the end of a long queue.

It was a very British queue. Not the cheery, camp stool, anorak and Thermos gang show to be found outside Harrods or Selfridges when the Mass Reducions signs go up, but the sort of *nomenclatura* throng who mill about at the crush bar of the Royal Opera House, or hop discreetly from foot to foot outside the loos at Glyndebourne. A queue with expensive hair and a pale gold mid-winter tan, muffed from neck to ankle in glossy Blackglama mink. A queue whose body language screamed "I am not part of a vulgar gaggle panting to get its hands on a bargain. I simply happen to be standing here, with, admittedly, one or two other people, waiting for admission to an exclusive shoe shop (which I am quite well off enough to patronise outside sale time)." The woman ahead of me turned and half-caught my eye, the tip of her pretty nose, just visible above her mink collar, peony pink with cold. "We must be mad," she said.

Not mad, exactly, but certainly in the grip of an addiction for which, once acquired, there is no cure. Perhaps Manolo Blahnik's sole should carry a health warning — for the instant you step into a pair of his shoes, you are Never The Same Again.

To say that Blahnik is a shoemaker is rather like saying that Fragonard used to dab a bit. He is an artist in shoes. His little shop, presided over by his



An artist in shoes: once in the grip of the Manolo Blahnik addiction, there is no cure.

fond and fragile sister, Evgeline, has about it the intent, rather severe air of an Old Master's studio. His designs have a quality of fantasy, not unusual in art, but very rare in fashion.

It is the fantasy that fuels the addiction. Blahnik is more or less impervious to the vagaries of fashion and his rare excursions into street style (an outstandingly nasty high-heeled rendition of a Timberland boot spring to mind) tend to be ill-advised. The power of his shoes lies in their ability to inspire the collector's rage to own a beautiful object — and the childish belief that Cinderella-like, simply by one's slipping on a pair of jewelled satin slippers or fragile sandals, one's life will be transformed.

Thus, peering in through the shop window on a grey January day, one sees the place full of women in winter overcoats, wobbling on one leg while attempting to thrust a woolly-stockinged foot into a little white leather kitten-heeled pump. What they see reflected in the mirror is not the flushed face, the shiny nose and the thick winter tights with their ludicrous summery finial, but a floaty dress, a balmy evening and that elegant little shoe, its vamps cut just

low enough to show the sexy cleft between the toes. These are shoes that take the upper hand. If you let them, I once walked down High Holborn barefoot in a thunderstorm, carrying my Blahnik court shoes rather than expose them to the rain. At least one pair of evening shoes has been lying in its box for years, waiting for an occasion sufficiently grand to merit a wearing. And oh, how I mourn the ones that got away. The sandals spangled with Swarovski that I couldn't afford; the pony-skin mules that I allowed my then boyfriend to talk me out of; the black velvet boots with scarlet heels that were a fatal mistake too small... They will haunt me until my dying day.

Fifteen years on, my Chelsea days are long gone, but the power of the Blahnik sale continues unabated. Here is a suede boot resting on a three-inch heel; or perhaps a pair of kitten-heeled courts striped in carnation and ivory. These are shoes for girls who travel everywhere by taxi. But who knows, when I put them on, I might yet find myself transformed into the sort of girl who does so everywhere by taxi...

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THE HARLEY MEDICAL GROUP
6 Harley Street, London W1N 1AA

مكتبة ابن الأصل

Can anyone juggle babies and work?

Having a career can be good for both us and our children, says Nigella Lawson

The term "working mother" is a particularly irritating one. True, it's not as contemptible or as ideologically provocative as "career girl" but if anything it is more nonsensical. What mother, after all, does not work?

But it sets us on an interesting path, because bound up in that phrase is the suggestion that only those who go out to work, leaving their children in someone else's care, have it hard. Mothers who stay at home, it is implied, have somehow gone for the soft option. The struggle, the guilt, the tormented plight of the working mother is well-documented. But the so-called non-working mother is either patronised or passed over.

The real truth, the secret that no one wants to admit out loud, even though all my friends — working mothers almost to a girl — own up to among ourselves, is that it is considerably easier to be a working mother who employs a nanny than a non-working mother who does it all herself. I mention the word nanny, notwithstanding the accusations of middle-class elitism it will undoubtedly judiciously engender. For this is a middle-class issue.

Working-class mothers have always had to work — no choice there at all — and don't have time for the angst-ridden self-justifications of their professional sisters. But it is the demands of middle-class life that have changed; it can no longer be maintained that a single income, even a relatively good one, nor in fact a nanny, is all that is needed to keep a family going.

Nevertheless, there are other reasons for working, beyond the financial. And I don't think we should apologise for that. Women with careers outside the home tend to lose their temper when this issue is raised, insisting that if there were no economic necessity for them to work outside the home, they wouldn't. That might be true for a vast number of women (as men) but not all, by any means. But these days the climate isn't right to acknowledge this: we must all claim (convincing ourselves in the while) that we leave our children in someone else's care in the weekdays against our real inclination; it

is a sacrifice, not an escape. It is a pity more people don't come clean. Much as we love our children, work outside the home can be good for us, and by extension, good for our children. There are limits to this argument, though. For one, most children wouldn't agree. A friend who has a tough, high-powered job, and two small children, said to me over a girls-only dinner the other night that she'd come to the conclusion that children (lets included) would rather have a mother suicidally depressed and at home than one who went out to work, however good that work was for her confidence and mental health. I suggested that suicidal depression wasn't particularly good for children. This I do know. "Oh," she said, "I'm not saying they would be unaffected, but that's what they'd prefer it."

And yes: children do want their mothers at home. I dare say they'd like their mothers at home, too. Whether in all cases (even if this were possible) it would make them happier, healthier individuals is not certain. There are just too many contributory factors of which to take account to be able to provide one answer for everyone.

But this is such an emotionally charged issue that everyone is likely to jump to the defence of their own. Women wrote to me recently and touched this subject to demonstrate that her children were not "disadvantaged" because she went out to work. Well, I did, and did I say they were? Of course not! But I mentioned this, I thought, it was better to be at home with them when young, or, rather more precisely, that I preferred to be with them as long as I could do some work as well and have someone to look after them while I was doing so. This, I concur, is the easiest option, though one with limited availability.

I did not say young children whose mothers went out to work were disadvantaged (although I sometimes think those mothers are), but it is idiotic for anyone to insist they're not. The point is, they are both disadvantaged and advantaged. There are problems and rewards ensuing



The toughest act of them all — to survive economically, many women struggle to keep a balance between work and motherhood

from going out to work and staying home.

I have to say, speaking as a daughter of a mother who did not go out to work, I don't think staying home is necessarily the answer. True, in my mother's day, women like her who didn't work didn't necessarily spend much time with their children either. And I do think that giving up work can breed enormous resentments and tensions in women who are not suited to playing the domestic card without respite. I notice among my friends that those who are most dedicated to working hard, long hours at all costs are those whose own mothers so pointedly sacrificed their own careers for the sake of their family. Unfortunately, the family often grows up to resent being the unrec-

ognised cause of such martyrdom.

Many of the difficulties of the working mother could be lessened not by making mothers feel that they shouldn't be working, but by changing the way in which we, and fathers, too, are expected to work. The last thing I am suggesting is preferential treatment for those with children. But the working day could be improved for all.

Family life is necessarily

denied when parents are expected to live practically at the office. But even so, nothing a mother actually does can affect a child as much as her relationship with it. A decision whether to go out to work or not isn't an irrelevant factor, but nor is it the defining one.

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The voting papers and an explanatory document will be sent to members of the Woolwich Building Society who will be entitled to vote under the Building Societies Act 1986 and the Society's Rules. The document will contain important information about the conversion of the Woolwich into a bank and full details of entitlement to vote in person or by proxy through the post. Any decision on voting should be based solely on information contained in the document.

Rise of the maternal girl

Mothers are being appreciated by employers at last, says Anjana Ahuja

A child is more likely to develop a happy, inquisitive and secure personality if its mother has stayed at home for the first two years of its life, according to child psychologists. This poses a conundrum. Maternity leave is usually only a few months, meaning women wanting to devote more time to their families have to leave work.

But in a competitive world, jobs are precious. And for high-flyers the wrench between a career and full-time motherhood can seem even more painful. There is no guarantee that the same job will be available, and, worse, resuming work could mean a lower-paid position.

Fortunately, change is afoot. One in three workers is a woman with a family, and many occupy senior managerial positions. As a result, companies are beginning to accept that a valued female employee does not lose her skills when she takes time out for her family.

"Many firms are realising that they have to be more flexible if they want to retain good people," says Stefan Stern from the Industrial Society. "The high street banks are prime examples. They have shed so many staff through downsizing that they are anxious to hang on to the people who are left."

Some firms arrange for employees to return for short periods to keep in touch with changes. Once they return, workplace nurseries make it easier for women to harmonise family and working roles.

Breaks are not exclusively for women, nor for workers with children. "Some companies are very understanding if a person wants to take, say,

18 months off to go travelling, learn a language, or undergo self-development in some other way," Stern says.

Some mothers may have given up working with the intention of never returning. But when children fly the nest, there is a strong temptation to seek fulfilment elsewhere. This means many women in their forties and fifties braving an unfamiliar jobs market.

This is where organisations such as the Women Returners' Network come in. WRN is a London-based organisation, which has set up courses to update skills.

"The number of obstacles make it extremely difficult for women to return to work," says Ruth Michael, the director. However, there is light amid the gloom — four out of five women who attend its 15-week course at Westminster University find work in three months.

Karin Mackenzie, 39, from north London, is one. Formerly a nurse, then a bookshop manager, she stopped full-time work with the birth of her first son in 1987. During the past ten years, she worked from home as a knitwear designer and a charity administrator.

"I was pushing 40 and felt it was time to do something serious," she says. "I didn't have any idea about formal interview techniques or writing a CV. The course taught me all that, and introduced me to information technology, which I really enjoyed. We even had a makeover with a colour consultant. I couldn't believe the difference appearance could make."

Breaks are not exclusively for women, nor for workers with children. "Some companies are very understanding if a person wants to take, say,



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Alan Coren



Let us pray that John Major has not shot himself in the fin

I tap the keys, this Tuesday dusk, in fear and trembling. For I love the man this side idolatry, and even, perhaps, that side, too; which is why, as the tyres of John Major's homecoming jet squeal against a grateful nation's tarmac, I pray that in his Pakistani absence things have not gone belly-up for him. We have had quite enough of that already.

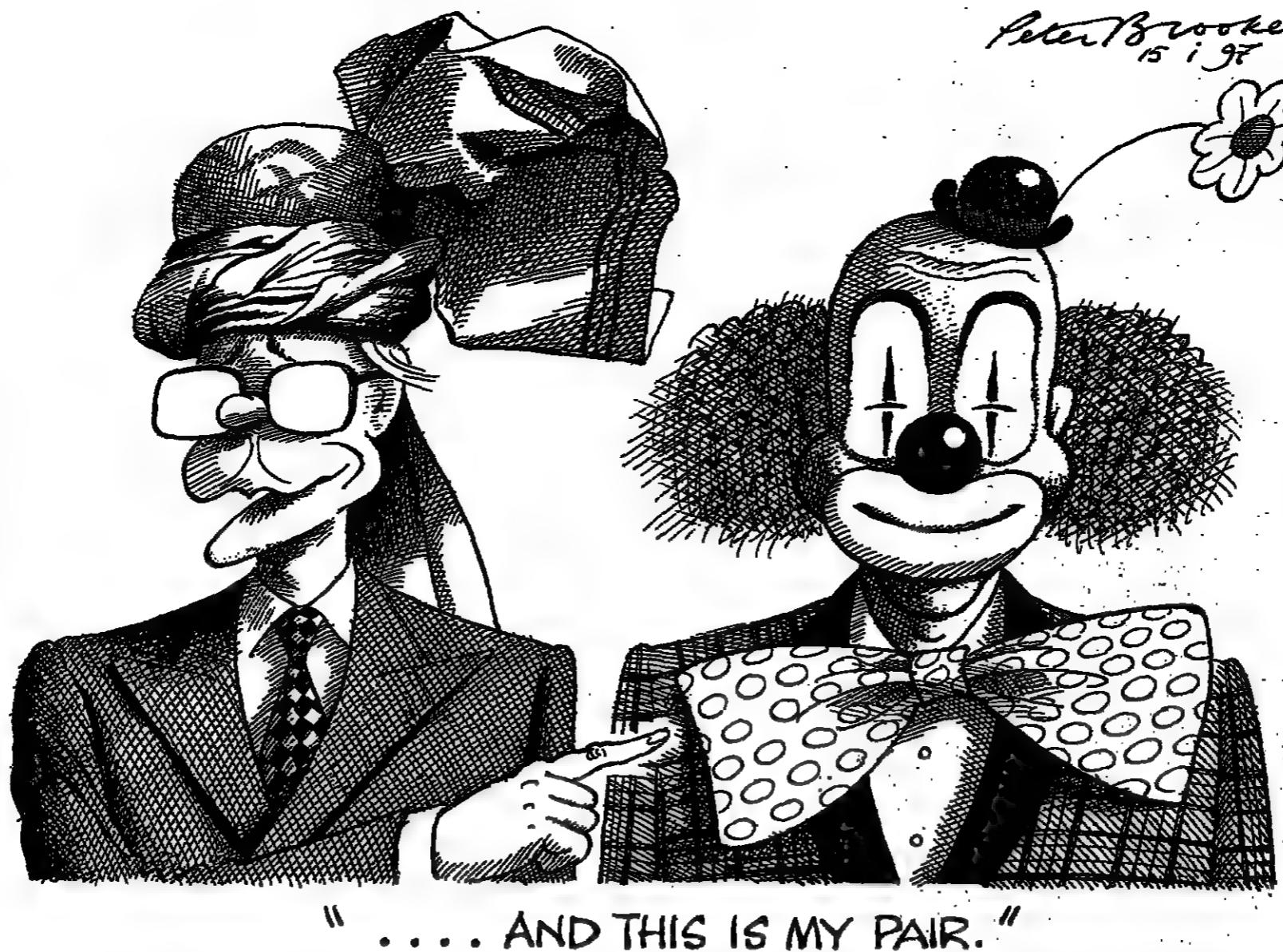
The things will, I'm sure, be at the forefront of his own concern. I feel certain that the first phone call he rushes to make, as Norma waits for their steaming by the carousel, praying that the souvenir vashmak in which she plans to trip, blessedly incognito, to her local Safeway, has not been too badly creased in transit, will be to the men looking after his things, to find out whether they are still belly-down. How can I feel so certain of this? Because of the news revealed in last Friday's *Times* that, during the icy weather, the two coppers who live in a hut in the Majors' trim Huntingdonshire garden were required to run from it with saucers of hot water. What they were required to run to was the garden pond, there to empty their saucers, and run back. As often as necessary. Because, all their other custodial duties notwithstanding, they are also members of the Serious Fish Squad: when, in freezes, our leader is away from home, his bodyguard is charged not merely with ensuring that he has turned the gas off and told the milkman but, with keeping his goldfish warm. The PM, we read, always leaves a stern note to that effect, doubtless underlining three times with his special red ballpoint for he cares deeply not only about you and me but also about his finner constituents. He does not want to come back from doing a bit of leading to find his pond looking like a fishmonger's slab.

But as all too often with John's policies, what we are looking at here is a dodgy conflation of the worthy, the sentimental, and the utterly misguided. That it is worthy speaks for itself. That it is sentimental is spoken for by every long-shaded village batsman, every cheery Rudge-pedalling midwife, every side-whiskered pub landlord pulling warm bitter beneath his marlin-twirlering thatch, citizens all of John's other Eden: we can be sure that, over the past few days, after the Majors have trudged wearily back from one ceremonial wing-ding after another, tugged off the earring, unclipped the bow, John has strolled in his socks to the window, gazed up at the Islamated moon, and thought of that same light sparkling the snow upon a distant English lawn where, between hut and pond, two honest British bobbies in sturdy hobnailed boots are running back and forth with brimming saucers.

That they will be doing it all night brings me to the bit I speak for, which is the utterly misguided bit. For, caring though it may appear, pouring hot water on a frozen fishpond is the worst thing you can do to it; if the water is less than boiling, it will merely form yet thicker ice; and if it is boiling, while it might, admittedly, drill a small hole in the ice, the sudden change in local temperature will either shock to death any fish which has swum up to see what all the commotion is about, or, no less likely, poach it on the spot. Either way, we are looking at a belly-up situation of the first water.

That is why I tremble so for our Prime Minister. If this tragedy has indeed occurred, when word of it gets out — as word, in an election year, always does — he will be in deep trouble. Paddy Ashdown, trained by the SBS in ad hoc survival, will tell Jeremy Paxman that what Major should have done was leave a ping-pong ball in the pond, so creating a permanent air-vent, any fool knows that, while Tony Blair will apprise John Humphrys of a titchy immersion heater, as used to warm an individual mug of coco in the fetes dorm, only £14.99, run a cable out from the house, and Bob's your guppie. And without draining, both will of course observe, over-pressed and under-funded police resources.

That is why I tremble for John tonight. You know about the British and poor dumb animals. If anything out there has indeed gone belly-up, then all his electoral aspirations could soon be reduced to little more than, in Dr Spooner's imperishable words, a half-warmed fish.



In praise of the second class

If admissions policy is reduced to the mechanically meritocratic, Oxbridge colleges will lose their raison d'être

I did not gain a first. A mind-blowing final month of work was not enough. A lesson was learnt and I missed the badge of honour so precious to scholars and so disregarded by everyone else. Had I succeeded I would not be writing this column. A first meant a postgraduate studentship and the initiation rite to an academic career. A first was the Magic Flute that would grant Sarastro's protection from the horrors of the World Outside. It was not to be. I left Oxford and looked towards other shores.

Since then nobody has ever asked the class of my degree. It means nothing to any job I know, other than that of academic. A first is a notoriously bad prediction of success in later life. Time was when the best undergraduates would excel in the professions and the Empire. Now most firsts are gobblled up by the university system. Other degree classes are all but obsolete. The fourth has gone and the third is being replaced by that absurd euphemism, a "lower second". Only the first comes with a quality guarantee, from academics eager to control their professional intake. An institution always honours those it wants to keep for its own. The monks of Ampleforth used to select as prefects the boys they thought would make the best monks.

Hence the current *Times* correspondence on Oxbridge admissions. A letter from Anthony Lejeune yesterday protested about Oxford and Cambridge colleges treating academic merit as the sole basis for admissions. By doing so they ignore family background and other criteria for collegiality. Colleges, he said, should aim at "creating a community where new entrants will be lifelong members and where young people will grow up, make friends and learn much more than appears on any lecture list." For this, says Mr Lejeune, family and school connections are relevant. And, he might have added, A-level performance is not a sufficient or even necessary condition for performing well in a college community.

Such remarks will send admissions tutors screaming under the nearest pillow. Oxbridge has for decades been indoctrinating itself with the idea that academic merit alone should dictate admission, so it can avoid the charge of social bias. Merit should be determined by a test, and that test should not be peculiar to one college or university. Even interviews are suspect: he would make a good scrum-half, she has dazzling eyes, that name could be worth touching for the new chemistry lab.

Such thoughts must be put out of mind. They have nothing to do with the case.

The gods of A-level thus serve every purpose. They claim to be blind to class, sex, age or beauty. Whom these gods have blessed, no admissions tutor can deny. Colleges need no longer hazard a judgment as to who might benefit from life within their walls. Like all professions, academics fear that such discretion is a step down the road to discrimination, beyond which lie the courts of law and the horrors of political correctness and ostracism. How much safer to let A-levels take the strain. Let proven merit be king. Leave the admissions tutor a humble cowering courtier.

For Oxford and Cambridge this has offered a dream layout. Nobody could quarrel with A-level results when they are common to every university. The colleges could go on creaming the cream of the nation's sixth forms, and argue that any apparent leaning towards private schools is the fault of the state schools. Their job is not social engineering, nor can they sensibly second-guess the A-level examiners. If an adequate number of pupils present themselves with three A grades at A-level, why run the risk of choosing entrants with anything else? Some might sue.

Stephen Monsell, a former admissions tutor at Pembroke College, Cambridge, wrote to *The Times* to deny any favouritism to potential donors. "We would like our admissions decisions to be completely blind," he said. They would avoid judgments "other-than on academic and personal qualities relevant to performance at university". On this basis, applicants may soon apply to Oxbridge with nothing but a microchip listing their GCSE and A-level marks implanted under their skin. Admissions tutors could be replaced by barcode scanners.

At which point there is no point in colleges and their paraphernalia of fellows, masters, traditions and endowments. Any institution with the

advantages of Oxbridge should be able to spit and polish an elite pre-packaged and delivered to its door by the A-level examiners. Oxbridge colleges are costly and have long received extra state subsidies. They can easily be reduced to halls of residence. If Oxbridge wants only to be top of the UCCA pile, it may as well disband these mini-monasteries with their petty independence. They can come closer to the throbbing embrace of Gillian Shephard's Higher Education Funding Council.

British universities are the most archaic of institutions, an Oxbridge college ostensibly the most archaic of all.

It works for only half the year, making even the British court system seem like Silicon Valley. It obeys medieval seasons, disbanding for seedtime and (long) harvest. Teaching methods are unchanged since Gladstone's day. College governance would be the despair of Erasmus.

Yet the essence of a university, like any human association, is to be more than the sum of its members. An Oxbridge college is a micro-university. Its pre-eminent virtue is in bringing under one roof literally a universe of intellectual callings and characters. It is a truly diverse society. Its duty is therefore not just to select future Fellows — that is, potential firsts — but to find students likely to stimulate each other in a semi-closed environment. If it stops doing this, it loses its reason for existing.

Up until the 1960s, this relied on the practice of eccentric admissions, including a skill in recruiting undergraduates with something other than first-class honours potential. Much of Oxbridge's character lay in the tradition of Max Beerbohm and Maurice Bowra, in what would now be called a "comprehensive" university. It ran the intellectual gamut from Nobel prizes to the undergraduate who produced the famous shortest-ever final paper: "Her subjects wanted Queen Elizabeth to abolish turnpike and common purpose."

poundage, but the splendid creature stood firm.

Any argument for retaining college discretion over admissions is attacked by liberals as merely a way of entrenching Oxbridge's middle-class past. Three decades of fiercely meritocratic criteria have not brought the working classes to Oxford. The university takes the same proportion of its intake (roughly a half) from the independent sector as it did in the 1970s. If admissions tutors want more state-school pupils, they should admit them, not hide behind the skirts of the A-level exams. I suspect they are hypocrites. Oxford and Cambridge would be happy to sacrifice the bourgeoisie on the altar of merit, so long as they can stay top of the league table. But threaten that status and you can kiss goodbye to favouring the proletariat.

For the moment, Oxbridge can have its cake and eat it. It can be class-blind, meritocratic and powerful all at the same time. I wonder for how much longer. College finances are in a parlous state. Unless the colleges promote their individual diversity — including eccentric admissions — they will not attract the endowments they desperately need as government withdraws its subsidies. The splendid edifice may start to crumble as privatisation creeps up on it.

There will be many a delicious irony. I suspect that places for the fee-paying students will bring more offspring of working-class parents than today's meritocracy. Colleges may even come forward to reverse the uniformity of Oxbridge gender co-education, which has deprived the two universities of their idiosyncrasy (saving a brave handful of female bastions). Colleges may then seriously try to balance such an intake with pupils from genuinely deprived backgrounds, rather than the present cosmetic scurry round "good comprehensives". Admissions tutors will have to start working again. Academic superiority may suffer, but in a good cause — that of a well-rounded university.

You cannot staff a living institution with a barren test of past merit. No company or newspaper or partnership would survive that way. Those choosing members of a proper college cannot delegate their professional judgment to a mechanical test. They are choosing a team. The best teams are chosen with a touch of inspiration and an inclination to gamble. Oxbridge is thus a microcosm of every professional institution in this age of standardisation. It either fights for its freedoms and shoulders its responsibilities, or it says goodbye to its common purpose.

Her Majesty has agreed to lend her title to a miniature Alstroemeria lily to be launched at the show in May, and has indicated that she hopes to attend the launch ceremony herself.

Peter Smith, a nurseryman from Worthing who breeds the lily and supplies flowers to royal households, believes his coup is unprecedented — although other flowers have been named after Queen Elizabeth. "It's the highlight of my career," he cries. "She is actually going to come along and give her name to it. We've already had a Princess Alice lily and a Princess Alexandra. And next year it will be a Princess Margaret."

Dog days

DRATIC measures are in order for Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, and his high-profile dogs Whisky and Soda. Patten, who is an admirer of Lady Freewell's campaign to change Britain's quarantine laws, has decided to spend the six months after he returns from the East living in his house in the South of France with the two terriers. His hope is that by then the British laws will have relaxed.

Who shall 'scape whipping?

Julian Critchley
on the cruelties of Commons pairing

Since Eric Heffer died of cancer, I have been without a regular parliamentary pair, but then I have not needed one. For I have been "in dock" since 1992, suffering from post-polio syndrome, for which I receive a disability allowance. I also have prostate cancer. The public does not really know what "pairing" means. It has no sexual connotation: it is simply a device whereby two MPs, one Labour and one Conservative, seek the permission of their whips' offices and agree to be absent, a manoeuvre which makes no difference to the result of any vote.

I listened to PM last night to hear Joe Ashton, the Labour MP, usually an amiable fellow, boast that in order to keep Jim Callaghan in office in the late 1970s, six Labour MPs had met their death in the line of duty.

Donald Dewar, the Labour chief whip, has banned all pairing on the ground that the Tory whips "cheated" in the fishing vote before Christmas. I voted with the Government, but bear no responsibility for whatever antics our whips' office may have got up to. But I, and others in far worse health than me, are to bear the consequences.

Since 1992, I have voted rarely in person. I can manage a 7pm vote, but at 10pm when the majority of divisions take place, I have been "nodded through". This arcane process means that MPs drive into New Palace Yard and park with ministerial cars at 9.45pm and wait to be checked by a Labour and a Conservative whip. We are then waved cheerfully on our way.

On one occasion since the last election, my car was parked behind an ambulance which had borne a Labour MP from the cancer ward of some hospital in Yorkshire, where he had only recently undergone an operation. He died shortly afterwards. He might have been paired with me, and I would have been saved a good deal of discomfort, and a great deal of pain.

On another occasion, when I was "nodded through" at ten o'clock, I noticed in front of me a London taxi cab inside which was Mrs Jo Richardson, MP, apparently wired up to some electrical/medical apparatus. The Labour whip who came down to check me through said "She'll soon be dead," and indeed she soon was. She, too, poor woman, might have been left in peace.

Although on crutches, I count as "walking wounded". I suffer from no life-threatening disease, although a course of radiotherapy in the summer of 1993 knocked the stuffing out of me. I have sat in some discomfort in my car, having been driven from Ludlow at our whip's behest, and by so doing voted either on a vote of no confidence, or in order to thwart the Eurosceptics. I was happy to do so.

The Government chief whip, Alastair Goodlad, who looks rather like Jeffrey Archer's butler, has been very decent to me. So was Richard Ryder. The Tory whips' office was once manned exclusively by gentlemen (this is no longer quite the case, but then the Tory party has changed since I was first elected in 1959). When they rebuked a Tory MP for some misdemeanour, their language is so understated as frequently to be misunderstood.

The Labour whip's office, on the other hand, has more in common with a sergeant's mess. They eff and blab with the best of them. Does this go some way to explaining the callousness with which they have treated their own sick and wounded in the past? There is such a thing as carrying party loyalty too far.

I think what I have written does serve, not only to explain to an unheeding public what pairing is, but to point to the bumbling that is so characteristic of Donald Dewar's not-so-merry men. I did not vote last night on the Finance Bill. I was paired, either with a Labour MP who shall be nameless (she is gravely ill), or, and this is much more likely, with an Ulster Protestant who preferred to stay up the Shankill Road. But I expect to be "nodded through" several more times before the election is finally called. Sir Julian is Conservative MP for Aldershot. Owing to ill-health he will not be standing at the election.



Patten has been in Britain over the past few days, on what he promises will be his last visit before the election. He insists that the frequency of his recent appearances over here has no connection with the imminence of the election, and prefers to talk of a future sipping chablis over a typewriter. With the yappers by his side, he plans to write the definitive book on the end of colonial Hong Kong.

P.H.S

Another Miss



Miss USA 1996

When the guard replied that he was eating veal, Jackson asked: "What's that?" On being told that it was baby calf, the icon burst into tears.

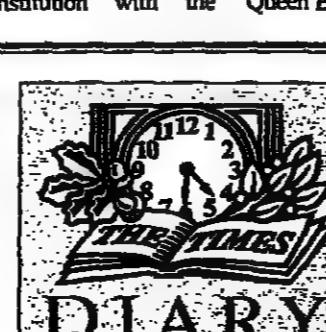
Pox-wallah

OTHER than the milliner who placed that ludicrous hat on John Major's head, the hero of the PM's trip to the White House from CBS, the television network which said it was contractually obliged to show the Miss USA pageant from Louisiana, the President would either have to find another day or be bumped off the schedule altogether.

It was no contest: the dignity of the presidency v television exposure. Exposure won and the White House agreed to move the speech to February 4. So now those eclectic viewers to whom both pageants appeal can see the President's earnest, suited, ramblings on one night and the bikinifest the next.

● Michael Jackson, the peculiar singer, is never one to hide his emotions. On his recent world tour, he leaned over to a security guard to ask what he was eating.

● No more of those Prince of Darkness tags for Tristan Garel-Jones, Conservative MP for Watford, and the man who sledgehammered the Maastricht Bill through Parliament. He has written a piece in defence of the Royal Family for Hello magazine. Presumably, they pay better than the more earnest



DIARY

Journals. A man of the widest cultural reference, Garel-Jones manages in just one paragraph to squeeze in mentions of Abraham Lincoln, de Tocqueville and Morecambe and Wise.

Garden tops

SHEAR-CLATTERING news for the shrub-pruners at the Chelsea Flower Show: Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother has given her name to a lily.

Still blooming. Ma'am



Kindly stop referring to me as "ref", Mr Fushana!

Peter Brookes
15.1.97

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 1997

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THE SILENT SECRETARY

Popular protesters in the Balkans still await British support

Malcolm Rifkind is a Foreign Secretary distinguished by his determined early support for the cause of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and the close attention he continues to pay to the region. The Balkans, by contrast, have always seemed to unnerve him, both as Defence Secretary and in his present job.

Caution was his watchword in Bosnia, born of an exaggerated fear that tough words could cost the lives of British troops. No such consideration enters into the drama on Serbia's streets, where a groundswell of democratic outrage appears finally to be forcing President Milosevic to reverse his fraudulent stealing of opposition victories in last November's municipal elections. Yet in public at least Mr Rifkind has yet to improve on his delicately expressed concern, at the London conference in early December, about "press freedom" and "other matters relating to the recent elections" in Serbia.

The Foreign Office, proudly pointing to the British Ambassador's easy access to Mr Milosevic, contends that private negotiation is just as important as public pressure. But access in such situations can be purchased at too high a price. The Foreign Office should be less proud of its statement, after Mr Milosevic bussed his loyalist henchmen into Belgrade in an attempt to turn peaceful protests violent, that "all sides should refrain from acts of provocation". Mr Rifkind cannot be unaware that in dealing with political bosses of the Milosevic stripe, neither private letters nor statements by Foreign Office spokesmen cut much ice.

Megaphone diplomacy has its limitations, but its uses too — and never more so than when a determined people asks no more of the outside world than solid moral backing at the highest political level. What Western European statesmen say matters because the demand for "European" standards of democracy is an important ingredient in the

popular ferment now spreading from Serbia to Bulgaria. Within these ex-Communist elites, even the most ruthless must factor this "European" view into their calculations as they struggle to retain control. The leverage thus created should be used to the full.

The West failed to throw its full diplomatic weight into preventing war in Croatia and then in Bosnia, and paid heavily for the failure. It should be all the more aware of the ease with which politics in this combustible region can turn violent. A century ago, Gladstone's eloquence made the fate of these European outposts of the crumbling Ottoman Empire a burning political issue in this country. Britain has now been out-Gladstoned even by Hervé de Charette, France's generally grey Foreign Minister, who yesterday demanded the prompt reinstatement of the election results and insisted that "the time when one could cancel elections and ignore the people's will is over in Europe". That is what Mr Rifkind should have been proclaiming from the rooftops, right from the start of the courageous and inventive citizens' protests that have turned Serbia's cities into great public forums.

With the greatest reluctance, Mr Milosevic at last appears resigned to ceding opposition control over Belgrade and Nis, Serbia's second city. This is only a tactical retreat; using legal smokescreens to blur the contours of each concession and thus deny his opponents a clear-cut political triumph. But people will not be fooled; once it is confirmed that he has given way, they will see their way to prising wide open the cracked edifice of his police state. Success in Belgrade will hasten the departure of Bulgaria's Socialists, who have forfeited their democratic mandate by their incontinent and corrupt misrule. It is the moment to pile on external pressure. The Foreign Secretary's first speech on these dramatic events is awaited.

PARTNERSHIP FOR GOOD

The Prince and Mrs Lawrence are natural allies

After Birmingham's ugly jeans, a voice of reason has been raised in defence of the Prince of Wales and his works. While a superficial debate about the succession has occupied TV producers, the Prince, through his Trust, has consoled himself with quest work which reaches those whose plight is never likely to attract the cameras.

It is wholly appropriate that Frances Lawrence should seek to advance her agenda for a re-stitching of civil society through the Trust. It seeks to work with the excluded young whose condition her late husband gave his life to improving. The Trust could provide the ideal vehicle for ensuring that her ethical insights and moral force are grounded in practical expertise.

The Prince's Trust celebrates its 21st anniversary this year with a solid record of success. It helps to present Britain's best face to the world. The highlights of both President Chirac's and Nelson Mandela's recent visits to Britain were Prince's Trust events. The Prince's Youth Business Trust has, without any fanfare to accompany its activities, helped to create 30,000 new companies and 60,000 new jobs. The achievement is all the more impressive given the Trust's direction of its efforts towards the disadvantaged young in neglected urban areas. Although its motivation has been philanthropic, the Trust has been as successful an investor as any commercial concern. The author James Morton has paid tribute to the Prince's efforts in *Investing with the Grand Masters*, arguing that "there is not a venture capital trust around today which can top his results over the last ten years".

The spirit of voluntarism which the Trust embodies has succeeded despite the cynicism of some in Westminster. Politicians of Left and Right have a natural tendency

either to stifle, or embrace too tightly, initiatives from outside. The Prince's volunteer schemes, which some in the political classes hoped might wither for want of support, have now proved so successful that parties are clamouring to associate themselves with the Trust's activities. It would be in the best interests of the Trust, the Prince, and a flourishing civil society if politicians were to restrict their involvement to encouragement. The success of the Trust has been built on the enthusiasm of the engaged, not the direction of the conscript.

Politicians should also resist the temptation to enlist the Trust's latest volunteer for their own colours. Mrs Lawrence's campaign has, in the Prime Minister's own words, "struck a chord" and members of his Government, most conspicuously the Home Secretary, have tried to give legislative effect to her aims. Mrs Lawrence's message has also found an answering call from politicians of other parties. But, more importantly, it has touched most directly many who consider themselves detached from the political process. Her manifesto cannot be the property of those who will be publishing their own, very different documents, in the coming months. Clumsy attempts by the politically motivated to appropriate her efforts run directly counter to the spirit of honest, earnest principle her words embody.

Unencumbered by false friends and misconceived expectations, the Prince and Mrs Lawrence might achieve a great deal. The work of the Trust has helped Britain to recover its reputation for pioneering social policy and given hope to thousands. The popular momentum for action to renew society articulated by Mrs Lawrence required a vehicle: The Prince's Trust is made for the terrain she wishes to cover.

EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW

Clinton's claim would establish a dubious precedent

As the one branch of American Government immune from the ballot box and television camera, the Supreme Court can normally command dignity and decorum. That capacity may be severely challenged over the next few months by *Clinton v Jones* with its attendant sexual sensationalism. The decision eventually reached may have a profound impact on Bill Clinton's political fortunes, and hence that of many other figures, during his second term.

The central legal issue is whether a serving President can claim immunity from prosecution in civil cases because of the unreasonable burdens such a situation would place on his time. Moreover, would such executive immunity preclude not only the onset of a trial but, as the White House has strongly asserted, the discovery of relevant witnesses and collection of related documentation as well?

This whole affair has produced a plethora of paradox. Conservatives who have historically been sympathetic to a strong presidency, and suspicious of sexual harassment allegations, have suddenly seen matters in a different light. Likewise, liberal defenders of the President have sheltered behind arguments first aired by President Nixon during the Watergate era. Meanwhile, feminist organisations, who were in the vanguard of the campaign against Clarence Thomas reaching the Supreme Court, have been curiously quiet concerning Mr Clinton.

At Monday's formal hearing the nine justices finally had their chance to cross-examine both sets of lawyers. Those lively exchanges suggest that a unanimous judgment is unlikely. The Clinton contention that the Oval Office could be paralysed by politically motivated lawsuits was — rightly — accorded respect. However, at least some on the bench were clearly disturbed by the novel and sweeping doctrine of White House immunity.

So they should be. It would establish the precedent that no President could ever be sued in a civil case, even when the purported offence occurred before the oath of office was administered and when the putative incident was unrelated to official duties. If those acting for Mrs Jones cannot even start to collect evidence until the year 2001, it is difficult to believe that their client will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The better interests of justice demand that depositions be taken and a trial judge now be appointed. That person should exercise the utmost sensitivity in the scheduling of legal action, accepting delay if there are indeed compelling demands on the President, proceeding if there are not. On Monday, Mr Clinton will again pledge to "protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States". That document boldly states that all Americans stand as equals before the law. Mr Clinton's claim appears incompatible with this noble principle.

Stressed teachers

From Mrs Danielle Vyse

Sir, The survey comparing British and French teachers, reported by your Health Correspondent on January 9, appears to me to be biased against British teachers.

As a Frenchwoman and a qualified teacher living in England, I know why British teachers are a lot more stressed. Their French counterparts are required to teach, and that is all: no playground and lunch duties, no extra supervision when another teacher is absent, no extra-curricular activities, fewer hours spent teaching, no necessity to stay at school during free periods, generally better pay. Parents, not schools, are blamed for children's bad behaviour.

In the words of my French sister-in-law, who teaches English in a secondary school in France: "Conditions are not the same. There'd be a revolution here if they were imposed on us."

Yours etc,
DANIELLE VYSE,
47 Southridge Rise,
Croydon, East Sussex.
January 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Britain's goals on joining Market

From Professor Lord Bellow, FBA

Sir, Suppose in 1961 Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath, in opening Britain's first bid to join what we called the "Common Market", had said to the British people:

"We are asking you to embark on a venture which will end up before the end of the century with Britain becoming a province in the European federation or 'super-state'; many of your laws will emanate from outside your own borders, and the validity of those passed by Parliament will be decided by a court in which you will have one voice among many, and suppose that policies dreamed up elsewhere could ruin the livelihoods of many of your fellow citizens."

Does Dr John Campbell ("Did Heath deceive Britain over Europe?", January 11) or anyone else think that the answer would have been other than a resounding "no"?

When last year I finished my book *Britain and European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf* I was uncertain whether those who brought the country to its present predicament were themselves misled or whether, intentionally or otherwise, they deceived others.

My view that there was a positive intention on the part of the makers of policy to secure Britain's participation in such a structure is, I think, demonstrated in the November 23, 1996, *Economist* article by Sir Nicholas Henderson, and the long review of books on Europe by Quentin Davies, MP, in *The Times Literary Supplement* of January 3, 1997.

It now seems to me to be the case that section of the British elite were so pessimistic about this country's capacity to perform as a successful nation state that they were determined to bring about the alternative: its submergence in a supranational entity. At no point did the desires of the mass of their fellow citizens appear to influence them. The arrogance of it.

Yours truly,

BELOFF,
House of Lords.
January 11.

From Mr Richard Buttrey

Sir, Dr John Campbell is incorrect when he says, "No one could claim at the time of the 1975 referendum that the goal of monetary union had not been spelt out." I quote from Harold Wilson's pamphlet, *Britain's New Deal in Europe*, issued to every household in advance of the referendum:

There was a threat to employment in Britain from the movement in the Common Market towards an Economic and Monetary Union. This threat could have forced us to accept fixed exchange rates for the pound, restricting industrial growth and so putting jobs at risk. This threat has been removed.

Those last five words were clearly meant to indicate that monetary union had been rejected.

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD BUTTREY,
6 Marlborough Crescent,
Grappenhall,
Nr Warrington, Cheshire.
January 11.

From Mr Peter Gardner

Sir, Dr John Campbell's article contains the weakest argument I have ever seen and merely proves that the original charge is correct. He says that Sir Edward Heath "never disguised that his conception of Europe was a political community" and confirms that in October 1972 he, Pompilius and Brandt "agreed to press on with economic and monetary union".

We are probably all familiar with the line in the 1971 White Paper — "there will be no erosion of essential national sovereignty". And the White Paper at the time of the 1975 referendum explicitly said that there were no plans for monetary union.

The charge of deceit is clearly borne out by the facts.

Yours faithfully,

PETER GARDNER
(Prospective parliamentary candidate,
UK Independence Party,
Oxford East,
78 St Mary's Road, Oxford,
January 12.)

'Crossover' chart hits the right note

From the Reverend J. R. Lowerson

Sir, I believe the conventional term for what you describe as the new "crossover" top 50 chart for classical "easy listening" music (report and leading article, January 7) is "middlebrow".

Alas, since its first use in the 1920s, that solid ascription has been largely pejorative. What it represents has been ignored by most critics, music historians and the new cultural rhetorics alike, yet it sums up much of British taste. Perhaps the word "middlebrow", with its firm honesty and comfortable, even cosy, sense make it seem less dynamic than "crossover", which sounds as if it is trying desperately to be somewhere else.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK DELUCHAR
(Chief Executive,
Royal Albert Hall,
Kensington Gore, SW7.
January 7.)

From Dr G. Silverstone

Sir, In your leading article today you again raise the matter of Claudio Abbado's objection to the use of highlights of his Mahler recordings on a single compact disc.

We can only guess what Mahler's own views might have been and can never know how other great symphonists might have felt about propagation of isolated movements.

However, it would be of interest to know the feeling of contemporary living symphonists on this matter. How would Sir Malcolm Arnold, Sir Maxwell Davies and Sir Michael Tippett feel about the recording of isolated movements from their symphonies on compilation discs?

Yours sincerely,
G. SILVERSTONE,
34 The Avenue, Sale, Cheshire.
January 7.

Books and computers

From Mr David H. Walton

Sir, Simon Jenkins makes a reasoned argument in favour of books against the all-powerful computer (article, January 4; letters, January 11). Some even more powerful arguments are now starting to appear in the worldwide audience.

Of the favoured storage methods, there are floppy disks with a guaranteed life of no more than a year; archive tape (about five years) and the current CD-Rom (about ten years).

A book printed on quality paper with carbon-based ink might last 1,000 years if stored in the same conditions as computer media.

With the growing storage of large amounts of data on computer systems and in tape archives, historians are already starting to have trouble accessing information of only 30 years ago.

The Internet is growing at about 5 per cent per annum according to technical journals, and every additional sign-on puts more strain on the worldwide system. I recently tried to download a large file from a popular site whilst America was awake. My terminal estimated the download time as five hours. In this time I could have taken a train to London, gone to a bookshop or library and read the information I sought.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID H. WALTON,
10 St Gurdas's Close,
Crowland,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.
January 5.

From the Head Master of Worth School

Sir, Worth's experience contradicts Simon Jenkins's hypothesis that books and computers are in opposition.

Tiger protection

From Mr Ian MacPhail

Sir, The Young People's Trust for the Environment wrote to Mr Major, prior to his visit to India, asking him to raise the tiger crisis at the highest possible level. We were delighted to read (report, January 10) that he has done this and express our thanks to him.

However, we were dismayed to read in the same report that the UK will be offering £50,000 "to groups researching ways to improve conservation methods". This will be fiddling while Rome burns. Vast sums have already been spent this way to no effect.

Only vigorous and adequately funded law enforcement will prevent the Indian tiger from becoming the next dodo. Poachers are killing one tiger per day unpunished.

British conservation charities are already taking eleventh-hour action: for instance, Care of the Wild has spent £70,000 in the field, purchasing four-wheel drive vehicles, motorboats, walkie-talkies, etc, and ensuring the wardens are properly clothed and paid. Other charities are following suit.

Our Government must follow their example and ensure that its grant is not frittered on pointless research.

Yours sincerely,
IAN S. MACPHAIL
(Chairman of the Board of Trustees),
Young People's Trust for the Environment,
8 Leapale Road, Guildford, Surrey.
January 13.

Not caught napping

From Mrs S. E. King

Sir, When a child I'm sure I was taught that squirrels hibernate.

Why, in the recent cold snap when temperatures have apparently been the lowest recorded for nine years, have the squirrels that live in our loft not only acted as an alarm clock by noisily running up and down the length of the house first thing in the morning, but been seen outside frisking in the snow?

We were relying on them being in a deep sleep so that we could kick them out without contest.

Yours faithfully,

S. KING,
Longfield,
Burne Avenue, Wickford, Essex.
January 10.

Letters to the Editor
that are intended
for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They
may be sent to a fax number —
0171-782 5046.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN PROWER
(Research officer,
British Motorcyclists Federation),
37 Buckthorn Avenue,
Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

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Canonisation of Polish priest

From Sir John Morgan

Sir, I read with great interest Roger Boyce's article and your leader of January 9 on the proposal to canonise Father Popieluszko, the Polish priest murdered by the communists.

I am not a Catholic and cannot comment on potential for miracles, but I wonder whether his posthumous impact on Poland's future might be taken into account.

On November 5, 1984, I was Ambassador in Warsaw and on that day had a visit by the then



COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK

January 14: The Queen was represented by the Baroness Trumpington (Lady in Waiting) at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of the Lord Colbroke, former Cabinet Minister which was held in St Michael's Church, Chester Square, London SW1, this evening.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent were represented by Lieutenant-Commander Sir Richard Buckley, RN.

Mrs Robert de Pass has succeeded the Hon Mary Morrison as Lady in Waiting to Her Majesty.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

January 14: The Princess Royal

this afternoon attended a Luncheon at Glasgow City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow, to mark

the Centenary Year of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Glasgow (Mr Patrick Lally), the Lt Col on the Lord Provost.

The Royal Highness, President, Animal Health Trust, this evening attended a Dinner for the Supporters Club at the Club, 18 Clifford Street, London W1.

The Princess Royal, President, Animal Health Trust, was repre-

sented by the Lord Fairhaven (Chairman of the Executive Com-

mmittee) at the Memorial Service for Mr John MacDougall (former Council Member) which was held in St James's Church, Piccadilly, London W1, this afternoon.

Royal engagements

The Princess Royal, as Patron of the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, will visit the citizens' advice bureaux at Wormwood Scrubs prison, an 10.20am, Patron of the Association of Community Workers, will visit Rush Craft School, Rush Craft Road, London E4, at 3.30pm; will visit William Morris School, Folly Lane, London E17, at 4.05pm and will visit the Leyton Youth Centre, Leyton Road, London E11 at 4.50pm.

Later, as President of the British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, she will attend the British Apparel Export awards and dinner at the Royal Lancaster Hotel at 7.15pm.

The Duke of Gloucester, as Patron, British Association of Friends of Museums, will attend a reception at the Museums and Galleries Committee, in Queen Anne's Gate, SW1, at 6.45pm.

Air Marshal Sir Denis Crowley-Milling

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Air Marshal Sir Denis Crowley-Milling, KCB, CBE, DSO, DFC, will be held in St Clement Danes, Strand, London, on Friday, April 18, 1997, at 11.30am. Dress for the occasion will be Serving Officers' Full Ceremonial Day Dress; Civilians' Morning Dress or Lounge Suit. Those intending to be present are asked to notify the Ministry of Defence, Pld (Ceremonial) (RAF) on 0171 218 2334 or 2628.

Dinners

Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers and Tobacco Blenders Mr Roger Merton, Master of the Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers and Tobacco Blenders, presided at a dinner held last night at Plaisterers' Hall. Mr Michael Winstanley was the principal guest and speaker. Mr Nigel Riddick also spoke. Among others present were The Headmaster of Sevenoaks School, accompanied by Robert Baxter, one of the company's sons; and the Master and Clerk of the Haberdashers' Tailor Chandlers'. Painter-Stainers'.

Musician's Gold and Silver Wreath Mrs Margaret Parmenter, Chartered Accountants' and Launderers' Companies

Institute of Sports Medicine Mr Robert Atkins, MP, was the host at a dinner of the Institute of Sports Medicine held last night at the House of Commons.

Chartered Accountants Mr Robert Atkins, MP, was the principal guest and speaker. Professor Michael Hobley also spoke. Mr Michael Malone, Minister of State for Health, and Ian Sproat, Minister for Sport, were present.

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Memorial services

Lord Colbroke

The Queen was represented by Baroness Trumpington at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Lord Colbroke held yesterday at St Michael's, Chester Square. The Duke and Duchess of Kent were represented by Lieutenant-Commander Sir Richard Buckley.

The Rev Charles Marnham officiated, assisted by the Rev Rachel Benson who led the prayers. Lord Alexander of Weeden, QC, gave an address.

The Lord Chancellor attended. The Prime Minister was represented by Mr John Ward, MP, and the Speaker by Mr Michael Morris, Chairman of Ways and Means.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of the Deputy Prime Minister and Mrs Heseltine and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland were present. The Chairman of the Conservative Party was represented by the Hon Michael Timpson, MP.

The Secretary of State for Transport, the Attorney General, Sir Edward Heath, CH, MP, Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM, FRS, and Sir Denis Thatcher, the Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland and the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, were present.

The Permanent Under-Secretary of State and Foreign Secretary and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alan Budd, was present.

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In the first of two reports on homeless people, Rachel Kelly looks at the problems they face finding primary healthcare

Passport to a doctor for the homeless

Vagrants who visit hospitals instead of a GP can cost the NHS three times as much

The recent icy weather that has swept Britain has highlighted the fate of the homeless. As if a lack of shelter were not worry enough, a new report tells how the men and women of the road have to struggle to get treatment for the array of medical problems they suffer.

The report, by the housing charity Shelter, says that many people living on the streets are forced to turn to hospitals' accident and emergency departments, because they have difficulty in finding a GP. Such visits cost three times as much as treatment by a family doctor.

Researchers surveyed the 11,873 homeless who visited the accident and emergency department of London's University College Hospital over a year. The cost was £44 a head, compared to £15.49 had they visited a GP. Shelter says that the hospital could have saved £60,000 if homeless people had seen a GP.

Mental illness was the second most common complaint of homeless people attending the department, although in seven out of ten cases the visit was inappropriate because they had apparently had no earlier contact with mental health workers.

Other people with respiratory illness were using the accident and emergency department to obtain prescriptions for their inhalers, a service which should be provided by GPs, the report says.

Chris Holmes, the director of Shelter, says: "This is the result of the difficulties faced by people without a permanent address in finding a doctor who is willing to take them on. They are forced to resort to casualty departments for what is effectively primary healthcare." While the Government's Patient's Charter says that

all people have a right to healthcare, homeless people are, he says, being denied this basic right. The report recommends reforming the GP system to make it easier for the homeless to register. Only 63 per cent of homeless people in the study are registered, compared with 97 per cent of the wider public. The report also recommends the development of drop-in clinics at set times for those who have difficulty in meeting appointments, and providing GPs in casualty departments.

A British Medical Association spokeswoman says: "The points that Shelter makes about costs are valid, and it is true that everyone should have the right to access to healthcare. But the extra cost of treating the homeless in accident and emergency departments is not as worrying as the fact that the care they get there is not likely to be as appropriate as the long-term continuity provided by a GP."

She adds that doctors specialising in medical care for the homeless believe that there is no reason for GPs to refuse to treat them. This is particularly true for long-term hostel residents.

Dr Nicholas Robinson, who for the past 12 years has been running a clinic for residents at the Thornecliffe Hotel, at Heston, near Hounslow in west London, which is used as a hostel for the homeless, says: "I'll never refuse to see anybody. GPs should be responsive to these very needy people; doctors are contractually obliged to provide services. It may be slightly more difficult to treat homeless patients, but it only takes a network of sensible local services. This shouldn't be a problem for GPs."

The Thornecliffe Hotel has a clinic in which a doctor and a psychiatric nurse provide "outreach" care for



Dr Simon Ramsden treats a patient at the clinic while others wait. "A lot of homeless people feel awkward about going into surgeries," he says



residents twice a week. Many of the people staying at the hostel are refugees who arrive in Britain at Heathrow, needing sustained medical care. This presents language problems: 50 languages have been encountered. There are also inadequate medical records and too often confusion over the patient's name.

One solution may be the Records Across London Project, in which homeless people are issued with a passport-style health diary containing

medical details for doctors and useful contacts for the patients.

At present, 100 health diaries have been issued in a pilot scheme, with plans to issue 10,000 in London this March. Other health authorities throughout Britain are said to be interested.

Simon Kinsey, project co-ordinator, says: "We're hoping that anybody who is mobile and uses more than one clinic or GP will benefit from this scheme. The usual prob-

lem of an administrative backlog won't be there, however quickly the patient moves around. It will also cut down on drug abuse from addicts getting prescriptions from two doctors simultaneously."

The Department of Health is running 28 projects around the country to bring the homeless into primary healthcare, although these have been subject to government cuts, causing six to close in the past year.

● Next week: how government cuts threaten the homeless

Christine Webb looks at

proposed legal changes to help crofters

A new line of trees planted by crofters in the village of Skye to provide shelter for their sheep will soon quell the bitter east winds that whip across the island.

The trees represent the crofters' newfound 'faith' in the future. They became their own landlords in 1993 when they formed the Bore and Annishader Township Trust, paying £20,000 for 18 crofts and the sites of the dwellings, on them. The 49 acres of native trees they have planted are their first investment.

Now the trust has become a model for the largest crofting landlord in Scotland, Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary. He wants to give his 1,400 croft tenants the chance to set themselves free. In some cases he will even give away the crofts.

Crofting is a unique form of land tenure, created in the last century to give smallholders protection after the Highland Clearances. The Crofters Act of 1886 gave crofters security of tenure, the right to hand the land on to heirs and the right to claim compensation from the landlord for improvements made on the land — including dwellings they build.

Further legislation includes the 1976 Act allowing crofters to buy their land for no more than 15 times the rental value. But there is a snag: once they own their land, crofters lose most of their rights, including the right to use common grazing land. By setting up a trust to buy their crofts, then renting the crofts back from the trust, their rights remain.

Mr Forsyth's landholding, mostly in the West Highlands and Western Isles, was ac-



Crofting is meeting a demand from people escaping the cities or returning to their roots

Why they are queuing for a life on Skye

quired mainly by agreement or "compulsory" purchase allowed by a 1919 Act, which was designed to provide crofts for returning servicemen.

The Transfer of Crofting Estates (Scotland) Bill, about to enter its committee stage in the House of Lords, allows him to offer ownership of crofts to crofters' trusts. It is described by the Crofters' Commission as a "facilitating tool" for those who want to take up the offer to buy.

Moving the Bill's second reading last November, Lord Lindsay, the Scottish Agriculture Minister, said: "With the

best will in the world, officials employed by a government department cannot be as sensitive to local needs and priorities as those who actually live there." The crofts could be transferred "at no consideration where this is necessary to make sure that the trust gets to a good start".

Giving land away might appear altruistic, but the Scottish Office gets just £100,000 rent for its 250,000 acres or so of crofting land. The average rent at Bore is £10 a year. This makes crofting such an attractive option that the population of Skye and Lochalsh is

water was excellent and the drainage "absolutely first class", while a manorial domain in the Grafton country came with 6,700 acres and stabling for 35 horses.

A specially commissioned book looks at the future for the countryside a hundred years hence. Predictions include the bizarre calculation that the average £750,000 country house will cost £250 million, assuming inflation.

THE centenary edition of *Country Life* comes out tomorrow, complete with a facsimile of the magazine from 1897, a time when it used to display its property ads on the cover (Rachel Kelly writes).

The first issue included the fact that Stowe House, Buckingham, "the stately ancestral home of the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos", was to let. "In consequence of the death of the late

tenant, HRH the Comte de Paris." Advertisements reflected the priorities of the time, says the current editor, Clive Aslet. Prospective tenants of a turreted pile outside Bicester were assured that the

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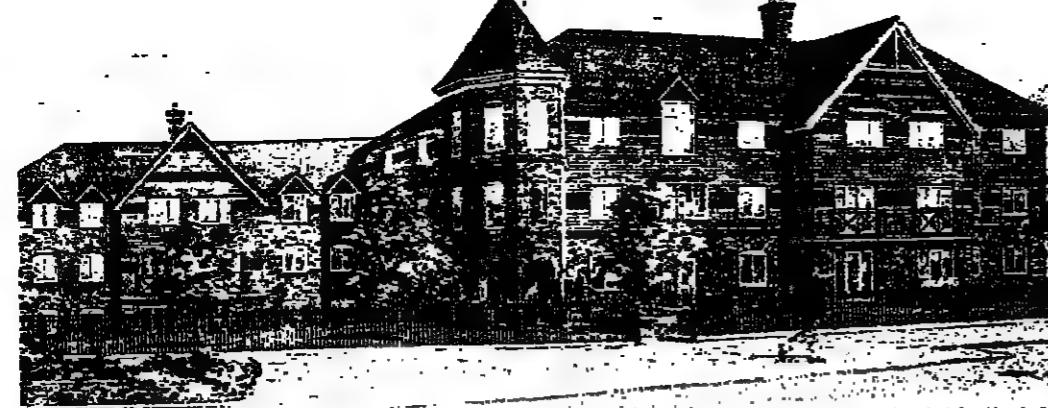
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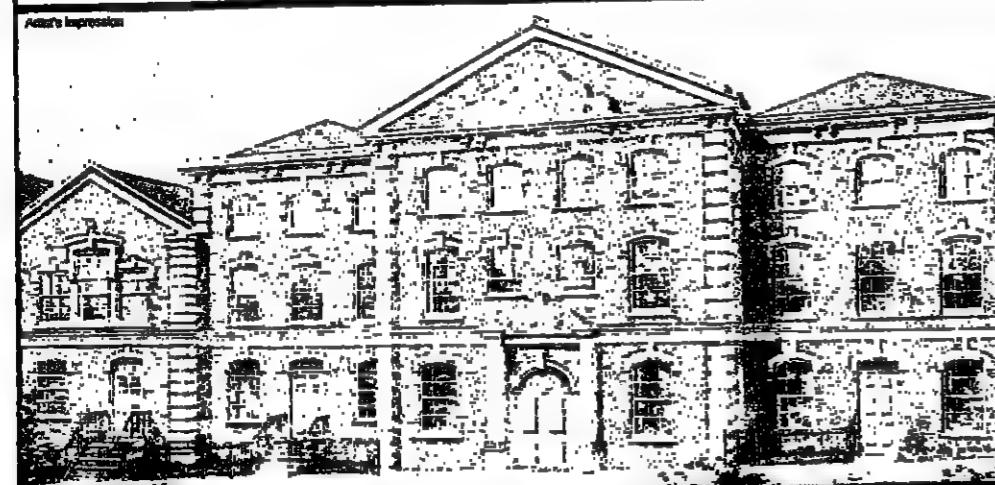
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 1997

Optimism on rates feeds market fever

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

SHARES raced to a record high yesterday on hopes that the Chancellor, armed with figures showing subdued inflationary pressures and a disappointing Christmas shopping season, will stand firm against calls for higher interest rates when he meets the Bank of England today. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares rallied strongly for the second successive day yesterday, piling on 60.9 points to close at a record 4,168.2. The buying came on renewed optimism about the outlook for base rates. A Reuters poll of 20 economists late last week found that 12 expected interest rates to stay at 6 per cent after today's monthly monetary meeting.

Saints blessed in early trading

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Saints went marching in to the Stock Exchange yesterday with shares in Southampton Football Club's new holding company rising sharply on the first day's trading. This followed the reverse takeover by Secure Retirement, a property company.

Shares in Secure, now renamed Southampton Leisure Holdings, closed at 150p, having at one stage touched 175p, valuing the club at £40.5 million. Secure shares were suspended at 46p in December to allow the reverse takeover to proceed with the company's original offer valuing the club at £8 million.

The club seeks to raise money towards its £35 million stadium, which should be built before the end of the decade. No new money was raised yesterday.

The appointment of Kenny Dalglish as Newcastle United manager last night put the flotation of the club back on course. It had intended to launch the float tomorrow but the resignation of Kevin Keegan had put this in doubt.

The club would not comment on the timetable but it is expected to reassure the City of its plans at the earliest opportunity.

Charlton Athletic, the Nationwide Division One team, became the latest club to announce its intention to join the stock market. The club is seeking a listing on the Alternative Investment Market, valued at between £10 million and £20 million.

Shareholders in Conrad yesterday agreed the £10 million takeover of Sheffield United. Trading will resume in the company tomorrow at the offer price of 60p with the company seeking to raise £12.5 million from a rights issue.

with eight expecting the Chancellor to concede a quarter-point increase.

Optimism on the outlook for rates was reinforced yesterday by news of a lower than expected rise in American consumer prices, which went some way to allaying fears of rising US interest rates and provoked another rally on Wall Street.

However, the economic news on the eve of today's key monetary meeting did not all go Kenneth Clarke's way with the publication yesterday of a report by the influential Treasury Select Committee that was highly critical of his Budget arithmetic.

The Treasury report served to highlight some of the more optimistic assumptions of the Budget, and may strengthen the Bank of England's hand today in looking for a rate increase that it believes must come sooner or later if the Government is to hit its inflation target. A genuinely tight Budget package should, in theory, have lessened the need for a monetary squeeze.

The committee was deeply sceptical about the Government's assumption of low inflation combined with economic growth, its assumption of big savings from its "Spend to Save" programme of cracking down on benefit fraud, and its forecasts for public spending as a whole.

The report noted that the Government had been able to limit planned public spending in the short term by arranging one-off inflows of money from the sale of Armed Forces' married quarters and the sale

of eight loan book. But this left spending plans more difficult to hit in future years.

Despite the critical tone of this report, the City's attention will be trained on today's monetary meeting. It does not start until mid-afternoon so any change in rates would not be announced until tomorrow.

Whether a rate rise is agreed today, the City is still expecting a modest monetary tightening in the months ahead. Sterling futures traded on the Liffe market are discounting a half-point increase in rates by September.

However, a recent clutch of British data suggests that, while the economy continues to display healthy growth, there is little sign of a consumer boom running out of control, and the news on inflation has been good. This should limit the need for anything but a modest rise in rates in the months ahead.

The most recent survey by the Confederation of British Industry showed that Christmas sales had been disappointing and the British Retail Consortium described the festive shopping season as nail-biting for retailers. The BRC said that price competition was still fierce and that there was no justification for a rise in interest rates.

This came on top of an unexpected decline in British manufacturing output in November as exporters suffered from sterling's strong appreciation, and another set of very subdued producer price figures for December.

Pennington, page 27

Morgan Grenfell suspends Horlick

BY ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

FRESH controversy yesterday engulfed Morgan Grenfell, the troubled fund manager owned by Deutsche Bank, when it suspended the head of its £15 billion UK pensions fund business.

The surprise move to suspend Nicola Horlick, 35, pending an internal investigation that will "look at a potential breach of contract" follows the sacking last September of Peter Young, Morgan Grenfell's star unit trust manager, over trading irregularities in two European funds.

A spokesman for Deutsche Morgan Grenfell said: "This has nothing to do with the Peter Young affair nor is there any suggestion of financial impropriety."

It is understood that Ms Horlick, who last year is believed to have earned £1.5 million, was in talks to join ABN Amro. At the weekend, senior managers at Morgan Grenfell are said to have become concerned that up to 12 members of Ms Horlick's team might consider joining her if she were to leave.

ABN Amro, which wants to beef up its asset management arm in London, declined to comment. City insiders believe that while the Dutch bank has held talks with Ms Horlick, who has juggled her high-flying career with looking after a family of five children, no final offer has been made.

Imro, the watchdog for fund managers, is conducting its own investigation into the Peter Young affair, which is also the subject of a Serious Fraud Office probe. Imro said of yesterday's suspension: "This is unconnected with the Peter Young affair and is not a regulatory matter."

Ms Horlick's husband Tim left Kleinwort Benson last year to join Salomon Brothers as head of corporate finance and investment banking. Kleinwort initially sought, but later dropped, a court injunction seeking to prevent the departure of key clients and staff.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4168.2	(+6.9)
Yield	3.74%	
FTSE All share	2042.5	(+24.4)
Nikkei	10980.13	(+25.66)
New York	3000.0	
S&P Jones	6747.87	(+32.45)
S&P Composite	765.68	(+7.17)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5.14%	(5.14%)
Long Bond	9.61%	(9.61%)
Yield	8.79%	(8.79%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	8.11%	(8.11%)
One month CHF future (Mar)	10.94	(10.94%)

STERLING

New York	1.6700	(1.6755)
London	1.6890	(1.6882)
S	2.6602	(2.6514)
DM	1.2977	(1.2955)
Fr	2.2977	(2.3035)
Yen	195.05	(194.05)
S Index	98.8	(98.3)

SSS DOLLAR

London	1.8845*	(1.8897)
DM	0.8380*	(0.8326)
Fr	1.3762*	(1.3759)
Yen	116.89*	(115.48)
S Index	98.8	(98.3)

YOUTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$23.00	(\$23.10)
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GOLD

London close	\$357.45	(\$359.05)
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* denotes midday trading price

Buoyant

Applications to build houses rose 30 per cent in the final quarter of last year according to the National House Building Council, a further sign of a strengthening housing market.

Page 26

Bubbling up

Shares in Matthew Clark, the troubled drinks company, rose 10 per cent yesterday as the stock market reacted favourably to the company's plans for recovery.

Page 27, *Tempus* 28

National Express chief resigns

BY JASON NISSE

THE chief executive of National Express, the bus company rapidly expanding into railways, airports and motorway services, resigned yesterday after only five months in the post. The departure of Ernest Patterson was put down to "cultural differences".

Mr Patterson, who spent 30 years at BET before departing after it was bought by Renktol, is set to receive a payout of £250,000. He had a similar payoff when he left BET.

His place is taken by Phil White, former head of West Midland Transport, which National Express bought 18 months ago. Mr White was scheduled to become chief executive after the retirement of Ray McEnhill in the summer because of ill-health. But at the last minute, Spencer Stuart, the headhunter, said Mr Patterson was available.

National Express said it that would be contacting Spencer Stuart to see if there would be a refund on the fee paid to find Mr Patterson.

Colin Child, National Express' finance director, denied there had been any disagreement about the group's acquisition strategy. This includes a £70 million

BA confident of American link-up

BY JON ASHWORTH

BOB AYLING, chief executive of British Airways, yesterday insisted the planned alliance with American Airlines would go ahead, in spite of signs of a deepening rift between London and Brussels.

Mr Aylung said Karel van Miert, the European Competition Commissioner, was wrong in suggesting that a combined BA/American would substantially restrict competition between America and the UK. Mr van Miert has outlined his fears in a letter to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

His remarks have raised questions about who ultimately will have the say on whether the alliance is approved. Mr van Miert said the European Commission would take Britain to the European Court of Justice if it nodded the deal through. However, under European law, the final say appears to rest with the relevant regulatory authority — in this case, the Department of Trade and Industry, working with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Mr Aylung said BA and American had made it clear that their plans were entirely conditional on a new open

skies agreement between the UK and America. Officials meet in Washington for the next round of talks next month. Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, Mr Aylung said: "We believe that this agreement will be pro-competitive, will be in the interests of consumers, and will bring much more competition to Heathrow. I remain optimistic that we can get through this and get approval."

The Commission is making a general study of European airlines, but did not specifically review any of the big link-ups before they were approved. United has linked with Lufthansa and SAS; Delta has linked with Swissair, Sabena and Austrian; and Northwest has tied with KLM.

Acting on advice from the OFT, Mr Lang has said he is minded to approve the deal if BA and American agree to certain conditions, including the divestment of 168 weekly slots at Heathrow. BA says it should be allowed to sell the slots.

Rival carriers say BA and American should give up 400 slots or more.

They fear BA and American could use their dominance of the north Atlantic to raise prices.

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Shopping centre goes to Argent

Argent Group, the property investment company, has exchanged contracts to acquire Crystal Peaks shopping centre from Chesterfield Properties for £35.5 million.

The 300,000-sq ft centre, developed in the late 1980s, serves residential areas south of Sheffield. It includes a Sainsbury food store, 50 shops, a ten-screen cinema, 1,900 parking spaces, health centre and covered market. Norwich Union has agreed to buy a 210,000 sq ft retail warehouse development on adjoining land.

AAA insurer

Scottish Equitable announced record new business figures yesterday, on the day that Standard & Poor's gave it a top AAA rating as a reflection of its integral position within Aegon, the Dutch insurance group. Total new premiums last year rose 41 per cent, to a record £1.32 billion. Total annualised premium income rose 28 per cent to £249.3 million.

ICI splash out

ICI, the chemicals and paints company, is investing £12 million in a new 20 million litre-a-year factory near Chandigarh in northern India to produce paint for the decorative and automotive markets.

Uno profits

Uno, the AIM-listed specialist retailer of upholstered furniture, reported pre-tax profits of £306,000 (£379,000 loss) for the 28 weeks to November 9, before exceptional flotation costs of £817,000. Adjusted earnings were 1.41p a share (2.71p loss), and there is a maiden interim dividend of 1.5p.

Denmans deal

Denmans Electrical, the distributor of electrical products, is negotiating a further acquisition to complete its diversification away from electrical wholesaling. The company reported a fall in pre-tax profits to £2.4 million, from £3 million, in the year to September 30.



Jeff Smith, photographed at AIM Group's factory in Bournemouth yesterday, expects an excellent full-year result

Growth in housebuilding reflects market confidence

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

FURTHER strength in the housing market was signalled yesterday after a jump in the number of applications to build houses. The increase coincides with growth in the buying power of first-time buyers.

In the final quarter of last year applications to build

homes rose 30 per cent over the same period of 1995 to 37,000, according to the National House-Building Council. Private-sector applications, excluding housing associations, showed a greater jump in activity with a 40 per cent increase in the last three

months of 1996 to 33,000. The NHBC, which registers applications for new homes, also recorded an increase in average daily sales of new houses. They rose 5 per cent in the last quarter of 1996 on the previous year's rate. Some 43,000 homes were completed

in the final three months of last year, a 7 per cent rise.

First-time buyers have more cash to buy homes than at any time since the early 1970s, according to an index on first-time buyers' ability to buy produced by the NHBC. The index, based on average earn-

AIM Group goes into treble time

BY RICHARD FOSTER

PROFITS of AIM Group, which designs and makes interiors for aircraft and train coaches, more than trebled to £2.8 million, from £10.000, before tax and exceptional items in the six months to October 31.

Adjusted earnings rose 12 per cent from 7.2p a share to 15.3p and the interim dividend is doubled to 3p a share, from 1.5p.

Turnover increased nearly 50 per cent, from £24.3 million to £36.1 million.

The company has secured a contract for the Nimrod 2000 programme to refurbish 23 aircraft over seven years. Northwest Airlines has also extended its order to 178 aircraft interiors.

Jeff Smith, chairman of AIM, said: "There is every expectation of an excellent full-year result."

Europe's biggest broadcaster born

CLT of Luxembourg, part owner of Channel 5 in Britain, and Bertelsmann of Germany yesterday completed the merger of their television and radio interests, creating Europe's largest broadcaster. The new group, to be called CLT-UFA, will have annual turnover of about £3.2 billion. The merged company will control 19 TV stations, grouped under the RTL logo, and 23 radio stations, including Talk Radio and Atlantic 252 in Britain, in ten European countries. It will also have a large production and rights business. Its ownership of Channel 5, Britain's last free broadcaster, is part of its strategy of concentrating on advertiser-supported TV.

CLT and Bertelsmann signed an agreement in July to merge their broadcasting interests, but the deal took longer than expected to receive shareholder and regulatory clearance. The new company will be 49 per cent owned by Bertelsmann and 49 per cent owned by Audiofina, which is indirectly controlled by Groupe Bruxelles Lambert and Havas of France. It will have its headquarters in Luxembourg.

Amex to create 150 jobs

AMERICAN EXPRESS, the financial services company, is creating 150 jobs in Newcastle-upon-Tyne at a new European call-centre serving card members in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Switzerland and Britain. American Express has outsourced the call-centre operation to Matrixx Marketing, a subsidiary of Cincinnati Bell Inc. Companies with existing telebusiness centres in Newcastle include the Automobile Association and British Airways.

Stake sale aids Birkby

PROFITS of Birkby Group rose to £6.3 million for the half year to September 30, helped by the company's disposal of its stake in Hill Hire, which raised £1.2 million. Excluding the exceptional profit, the workspace management company's pre-tax profit rose by 19 per cent, from £3.82 million to £4.54 million. Earnings per share before the exceptional profit rose by 17.5 per cent, from 6.3p to 7.4p. The interim dividend is up from 2.2p to 2.3p. Proceeds of the Hill Hire stake sale were used to buy British Coal Enterprise, adding 1.5 million square feet.

Limit capacity at £644m

THE London Insurance Market Investment Trust (Limit), the largest Lloyd's corporate capital vehicle, has announced underwriting capacity of £644 million for 1997. Limit has allocated capacity to 84 syndicates managed by 35 managing agency groups, compared with 95 syndicates managed by 36 managing agents in 1996. Direct capacity attributable to Limit shareholders is £65 million. The net tangible asset value at December 31, last year, was £20.4p (£18.9p) per share. The shares were unchanged at 129p.

Atlantic Telecom up

ATLANTIC TELECOM, Britain's first quoted wireless telephony company, said it has gained almost 1,600 residential and business customers twice as many as it had forecast, in its first two months of commercial operation and expects to break even in two or three years. Atlantic reported an operating loss of £21.000 in the half year to September 30, against a loss of £440,000 previously, on turnover of £3.76 million. A one-off gain of £541,000 on the sale of Coventry Cable produced pre-tax profits of £300,000 (£397,000 loss). *Tempus*, page 28

Provision hurts VHE

VHE Holdings, the land regeneration and reclamation company, suffered a fall in pre-tax profit to £1 million, from £1.2 million, in the half-year to September 30. The decrease comes after a £500,000 provision against a dismantling contract that was adversely affected by a fall in steel prices. Earnings fell to 2.1p a share, from 2.5p. Turnover rose to £20.1 million, from £17.2 million. Again there is no interim dividend but the company said that it would resume dividend payments at the time of the full-year results.

Bucknall pays out again

BUCKNALL GROUP, the facilities management and business services company, is resuming dividend payments after a six-year absence. Shareholders are to get a 0.25p a share interim dividend after the company achieved a 36 per cent rise in profits to £354,000 in the half year ended October 31. Earnings were 20 per cent higher at 1.2p. The shares rose 1p to 52p. Richard Miles, the chairman, said that the company had made considerable progress in markets that were only slightly improved.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Departures setback for GGT deal

BY JASON NISSE

GGT GROUPS planned £105 million purchase of French advertising agency group BDDP has been dealt another setback by the resignations of two of the most senior executives of the French agency.

Natalie Rastoin, the general manager of BDDP in Paris, has told the company she is also going and will join Ogilvy & Mather, the agency owned by BDDP. GGT hopes to reveal the terms of the BDDP deal by February.

The departures come on top of the loss of \$50 million of business from Ford, the motor company, by Wells Rich Greene, the US agency owned by BDDP. GGT hopes to

Backing for ostrich rescue

BY MARIJANNE CURPHAY

INVESTORS who lost money when an ostrich farming company collapsed have backed a "rescue plan" that has meant them contributing more cash.

To take part, people had to put up at least 13 per cent of their original investment and hand over ownership of their birds, which are kept on farms in Belgium.

A total of £1.5 million needed to be raised by last Friday in order for the launch of a new ostrich farming company, called Belafrutre, to go ahead. The deadline has now been extended to January 20 in order to enable overseas investors to raise the cash in time.

Belafrutre is backed by some of the original investors in the crashed Ostrich Farming Corporation. About 2,700 people put nearly £22 million into the OFC.

The company was closed down last April by the Department of Trade and Industry.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys				
Australia \$	2.24	2.08	2.08	0.680	0.585
Austria Sch	19.65	18.15	18.15	0.585	0.585
Belgium Fr	57.50	52.00	52.00	2.31	2.31
Canada \$	2.361	2.201	2.201	1.12	1.12
Cyprus Cyp	0.829	0.774	0.774	275.00	275.00
Denmark Kr	10.68	9.68	9.68	8.38	7.58
Egypt £	0.52	0.52	0.52	2.00	2.00
France Fr	9.36	8.71	8.71	12.25	11.45
Germany DM	2.61	2.60	2.60	2.43	2.25
Iceland króna	4.02	4.02	4.02	1.00	1.00
Hong Kong \$	13.67	12.37	12.37	1.770	1.840
Ireland £	1.20	1.00	1.00		
Italy Lira	1.07	0.98	0.98		
Japan Yen	5.74	5.00	5.00		
Malta Lira	2.02	2.02	2.02		
Switzerland Fr	208.80	192.80	192.80		

Rates for small denominations bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS KUROTA FINANCE (UK) PLC IN RE KUROTA FINANCE (UK) PLC (LIQUIDATION)

On 6 December 1996 the above company was dissolved with effect from 1 January 1997. Creditors are invited to make known to the Liquidator any debts or claims due to them from the company. The Liquidator will then provide such further details or other information or documents necessary to the Liquidator.

A creditor who has not proved his debt or claim at the meeting of creditors held at 15 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1LB on 16 January 1997, may file a written statement of his debt or claim with the Liquidator within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Debtors are invited to make known to the Liquidator any debts or claims due to the company. The Liquidator will then provide such further details or other information or documents necessary to the Liquidator.

Any creditor of the Company may file a written statement of his debt or claim with the Liquidator within 21 days of the date of this notice.

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Some impertinent advice for the Chancellor National Express drops the pilot Gap in pensions regulator's armoury

ONE of the pleasures of writing a column like this is the occasional offer of impertinent advice to those who know better, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kenneth Clarke might bear in mind the following as he goes into bat this morning against the Bank of England:

The Bank is not terribly concerned, it seems, about the rise in sterling. Markets go up and down, old boy, and the pound can fall back again at any time. A strong currency does not necessarily translate into lower prices on the high street, particularly if there is lots of consumer demand in the economy.

But the key question is just how much demand there really is out there. For every teenage scribbler who lived through the ageing process of the late 1980s and is convinced that another inflationary boom and bust is just around the corner, there is a piece of evidence that suggests the opposite. Here are a few:

• For all the hopeful headlines and pretty shopping pictures on newspaper front pages, the actual evidence suggests that Christmas on the high street was disappointing. The CBI's report showed sales volumes well short of readers' expectations; the British Retail Consortium reported a "nail-biting" time for its members.

• There is much talk about

rising pay, but underlying trends in personal incomes are not nearly as strong as headline figures suggest. David Owen, of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, points out that annual real personal disposable income growth of 4.6 per cent in the third quarter of last year, the strongest rise since 1988, was distorted by the inclusion of income flowing into pension funds and life assurance companies.

This income includes dividends, net interest and rental income as well as the fruits of share buybacks and special dividends. None of this is about to be spent on the high street.

• Despite the hype surrounding windfalls from building society mergers and conversions, evidence derived from the two handouts already made suggests that little of the money has actually been spent. A survey by Nikko Europe found that two thirds of the windfalls to come are likely to be saved.

• Consumers are not going to get a big boost from higher wages. The latest figures from Incomes and Data Services suggest that pay settlements have

fallen back below 3.5 per cent for the first time since 1995.

None of this rules out a quarter-point rise this week or next month. What it does suggest, and this is far more important, is that the variation in interest rates in the current cycle might be slight.

Base rates troughed at 5.25 per cent in February 1994. The life futures market is currently pricing in a half point rise in base rates by September and another half point over the next year, still leaving rates at 7 per cent. But if the latest evidence is anything to go by, even that may be too pessimistic.

Driving down a dead end?

• IT is an invariable rule in corporate life that if a company admits an offence, it is guilty of far worse. National Express admits to having chosen the wrong man as chief executive five months ago but claims that there was no boardroom bust-up; ergo, there must have been tears and tantrums all round.

PENNINGTON



Ernie Patterson's departure was a genuine surprise. The previous day the company was reported in this newspaper to be planning its most ambitious diversification yet, a £380 million purchase of Welcome Break or Birmingham Airport.

Instead, Mr Patterson is being painted as a stick-in-the-mud who stood against an exciting future, "Mr Obscurity", to use his stock market nickname, whose departure after five months is no great loss.

Also dangerous: he becomes the experienced man brought in from outside who suggested a foot on the brakes rather than the purchase of anything visible from the coach windows.

If you buy expertise, you need a compelling reason to ignore it. If National Express does decide to venture beyond its core coach and rail business and lives to regret it, directors cannot claim they have not been warned.

Mr Patterson acquired an appreciation of the benefits of caution, along with his first big salary pay-off, at BET, a company that was humbled by unwise and hasty diversification. There is already a long list of privatised concerns who have

dreams had to be reined in by more sober executives. Tempting, but this would preclude any further ambitious moves such as the purchase of Welcome Break or Birmingham Airport.

Instead, Mr Patterson is being

expanded beyond their area of competence. There must now be a serious danger of National Express joining that list.

Whistling in the dark

• THE Pensions Act was meant to make as sure as practicable that there was no repeat of the Robert Maxwell affair or the many other abuses that did not make enough headlines to stir Parliament into action. The new regime was symbolically inaugurated when John Hayes rang the curtain up on the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority.

But some change may be more

the course of bids, deals and restructuring.

In each case, a regulator needs to know what is going on. Mr Hayes will have to rely on whistleblowers such as auditors and trustees, because forcing 200,000 schemes to make regular returns to his office would be bureaucratic, costly and might discourage employers from providing their own schemes. On the other hand, it might have encouraged the closure of more than 100,000 tiny registered schemes that are most open to secret manipulation and should probably not exist.

Building brands

• RESEARCH from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson suggests that most building societies are not worth much. The broker hired Interbrand to value the names of mortgage lenders, and found that brands such as Alliance & Leicester and Northern Rock do little to attract custom. The big brands such as Halifax and Abbey National are useful because they are attached to huge retail chains. Loyalty counts for nothing, and price, is all. Follow this through to its logical conclusion, and the average small society seeking to convert to plc status can expect one fate: extinction by takeover.



Peter Aikens, right, Matthew Clark chief executive, and Hugh Etheridge, finance director, toast the share price rise

Matthew Clark shares lifted by recovery plan

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

SHARES of Matthew Clark, the troubled drinks company, rose 10 per cent yesterday as the City reacted positively to a recovery plan.

Matthew Clark shares plummeted nearly 60 per cent in the autumn after the company blamed alcopops for a huge fall in the sales of its premium packaged brands, which include Diamond White and K cider. Shares in the company, closed at 33p yesterday, up 29p, compared with a high of 80p last year.

Peter Aikens, chief executive, admitted that the impact of the arrival of alcopops was misjudged, although he said the company is now confident of restoring its growth pros-

pects over the medium term. It estimates that lost sales, combined with a fierce price war, will cost around £22 million in lost profits this year. The company is responding with a fourfold increase in its advertising expenditure, to around £10 million, and it expects to maintain its final dividend at 24p a share.

The drinks company said that it had introduced price increases last week, the first for four years; and was confident that the rest of the sector would follow its lead. Matthew Clark is also about to launch Blackthorn Gold, the first smoothflow cider, backed by substantial advertising. Pre-tax profits for the six

months to October 31 rose 40 per cent, to £21.6 million, on an overall turnover of £293 million, an increase of 68 per cent. But earnings per share fell 26 per cent, to 16.8p, because of the diluting impact of the acquisition of Taunton Cider last November.

The branded drinks division increased profits by 48 per cent, to £20.9 million. The company said that sales of its Diamond White and K brands had fallen by around 30 per cent since the summer and profits had suffered by around £11 million as a consequence. The intense price competition, resulting in a fall in off-trade margins had also had a £4 million negative impact.

Tempus, page 28

Hodder Headline publishes 9% gain

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE bestselling talents of John le Carré, Stephen King and Kenny Dalglish gave a lift to sales at Hodder Headline, one of the UK's largest book publishers, in the final quarter of last year.

In the 12 months to December 31, the company's like-for-like sales grew 9 per cent, while in the last quarter they were ahead 12 per cent.

Turi Hely Hutchinson, chief executive, said that trading benefited from "outstanding sales" of such hardback

Recovery prompts big bonus payout at DTC

By ROBERT MILLER

STAFF at Debenham Tewson & Panama (DTC), the quoted commercial property agent and chartered surveyor, are set to receive hefty year-end bonuses after a near-100 per cent jump, to £1.86 million, in half-year pre-tax profits.

Richard Lay, chairman, said: "If our current levels of profitability are maintained for the year, our staff costs will rise to take account of our bonus scheme." Earnings rose to 2.44p a share, from 1.22p. The company, which cut its

interim dividend to 0.6p a share last time, is now increasing the dividend to 0.9p.

Mr Lay said the recovery in the commercial property market was now spreading from London into the main regional centres, but added: "Business generally may well delay property and investment decisions during the run-up to a general election, and it is likely that interest rates will rise to control inflation, not least in the residential market, during the next few months."

Tempus, page 28

Passenger surge boosts BAA

By CARL MORTISHED

TRAFFIC through BAA's airports surged 7.8 per cent in December, with strong growth at Gatwick and on North Atlantic routes.

The group had a record year, with 96.3 million passengers passing through its gates in 1996, up 5.5 per cent on the previous year. BAA shares rose 18p to 503p.

Traffic to the Irish Republic showed the strongest growth, up 12.6 per cent on last year. North Atlantic traffic grew 7.4 per cent and other long-haul passengers rose 9 per cent.

European charter volumes fell 5.3 per cent because of a reduction in capacity by tour operators. Passenger growth at Heathrow remained subdued, with an annual rise of only 3.3 per cent because of a reduction in fare discounting by the main airlines.

Gatwick achieved overall growth of 7.7 per cent thanks to a strong contribution from scheduled traffic. BAA, whose chief executive is Sir John Egan, said yesterday that European charter traffic now accounted for only a third of



Egan: a record year

Opra gets tough on infringements

By ROBERT MILLER

Ashquay, the property group, has lost its £21 million takeover bid for the rival UK Estates after its last-minute share buys missed registration by Monday's deadline.

The hostile bidder said yesterday that it had won only 45.8 per cent of UK Estates, leaving it 4.2 per cent short of victory. It succeeded in buying the outstanding shares in the market by 12.58pm on Monday, but the transfer did not reach the registrar in time for the 1pm deadline, so the bid failed. Ashquay said an earlier hitch in the Crest settlement system also hindered it.

Ashquay is left with £1 million expenses and a loss of £133,000 on its shares in UK Estates, down 5p, to 23.5p. Ashquay eased 3p, to 37p.

Tough new guidelines on whistleblowing by City pension fund professionals who guard some £600 billion of assets are expected to be unveiled by the new pensions watchdog (see Pennington, this page).

John Hayes, chairman of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), a statutory body established under the 1995 Pensions Act, plans to issue a consultative document ahead of final rules being in place by April 6. From that date professions such as auditors and accountants will have a legal obligation to report any suspected infringements in the 200,000 occupational pension plans registered with Opra.

Mr Hayes said: "The guidelines we will issue for consultation make it clear that professionals involved with occupa-

tional pension schemes have a duty to blow the whistle on any possible infringement."

The watchdog, who has the power to fine companies up to £50,000 and individuals up to £5,000, added: "I want to make clear that if someone makes a genuine mistake and owns up to it and we can sort it out properly we are not necessarily talking about fines."

However, if dishonesty and deception are involved we will act swiftly and decisively. We do have civil powers to secure pension fund assets."

Also coming into force this year are new rules on member trustees being appointed to company or occupational schemes. Mr Hayes said lay trustees had nothing to fear as long as they exercised normal caution and diligence.

City Diary, page 29

Project delay hits Babcock

By MARTIN BARROW

BABCOCK International, the engineering group, said sales revenue in the year to March 31, 1998 would be reduced by about £8 million due to the further deferral of the Hanson-SCM Kemerton project, for which the group's process division had a major engineering services role.

Babcock said that its process division had recently won a £10 million lump sum contract in connection with a new chromic acid plant to be built at Teesside which would partly compensate for the loss on the project at Hanson's titanium dioxide plant in Kemerton, Australia. Babcock shares fell 4p to 71p.

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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Steel shares buckle as the pound's rise hits profits

AS THE rest of the stock market soared to its highest level ever, shares of British Steel were plumbing the depths.

The price ended 5½p down at a new low of 146½p ahead of a presentation for brokers in London last night at which it was hoped the group would shed further light on damage that the strong pound was inflicting on profits.

Only a few weeks ago the company indicated that the strong pound was playing havoc with its ability to compete, providing the signal for a series of savage profit downgrades.

Brokers that had been looking for profits at the pre-tax level of £650 million for the year to March 1998 cut their forecasts to £350 million. That compares with estimates for the current year of £550 million. Last year the group made profits of more than £1 billion.

One company which has suffered from falling steel prices is VHE Holdings, which specialises in the re-use of land and is headed by Brian Waldron, chairman, with Brian Thomson managing director. The company saw profits slide in the first half after the price of one of its dismantling contracts was adversely affected in between tendering for the work and completing the project. It finished 1½p cheaper at 85p.

The rest of the equity market continued to race ahead amid growing hopes that the Chancellor will be able to stave off another rise in interest rates at his meeting with the Governor of the Bank of England today.

Stock shortages and a positive start to trading on Wall Street enabled prices to close at their best of the day. The FTSE 100 index surged 60.9 to close at an all-time high of 4,168.2, stretching the gain for the past two days to 11.6. Total turnover reached a healthy one billion shares.

The best gains were seen among financials, where stock shortages were acute. Double-digit gains were seen in the banks where National Westminster leapt 24½p to 785p. Barclays 20p to 1,111. HSBC 32½p to 1,138.5p. Lloyds TSB 22½p to 480½p. Abbey National 27p to 800½p. Bank of Scotland 15p to 323½p. Royal Bank of Scotland 14p to 532½p, and Standard Chartered 18p to 711½p.

The composite insurers had



Brian Waldron, left, and Brian Thomson of VHE, down 1½p

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performances in the run-up to Christmas, Morgan Stanley, the US securities house, and rival NatWest Securities were both pushing the supermarket chains to clients. NatWest is particularly keen on Somerfield up 6½p at 171p ahead of maiden interim figures next week. Others to benefit were Asda, up 32½p to 129p, Kwik Save 10p to 332½p.

Charles Sidney, the Bradford-based Mercedes vehicle distributor, is making up lost ground, its share price gaining a further 1½p to 91½p, compared with a 1996 peak of 107p. Whispers in the market claim a bid of 120p a share may soon be on the table. This would give the group a price tag of almost £50 million.

ests in the financial sector, rose 2½p to 493½p, while Mercury Asset Management put on 36½p at 1,125½p.

BT climbed 6p to 414½p as UBS, the broker, upgraded its holding to a "buy". Almost 21 million shares had changed hands by the close.

The food retailers benefited as investors began switching out of the general retailers at 382½p earlier in the week. Secure Retirement, subject of

a reverse takeover from Southampton Football Club, scored from the kick-off with a sharp rise in the share price after returning from suspension. The shares, suspended at 46p, began trading at 140p before touching a peak for the day of 175p. They later settled at 150p, a rise of 104p on the day.

Sunderland, the recent market debutante, also put on 15p at 695p after being floated at 585p, but Manchester United slipped from its all-time high to close 30p lower at 707p. West Bromwich Albion rose 630 to 250 as Paul Thompson, a director, picked up a further 5,000 shares at £245 each. It takes his total holding to 13,920, or 18 per cent.

Matthew Clark, the troubled cidermaker, rallied a further 20p to 332½p despite first-half figures falling "substantially" short of target. Pre-tax profits were 40 per cent ahead at £21.6 million, helped by recent acquisitions with the dividend held at 9p. Rival Merrydowns was unchanged at 107½p.

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A bumper set of half-year figures lifted AIM Group 47p to 417p. Brokers have now begun upgrading their profit numbers for the full year. A revived flurry of institutional buying benefited Wyndham Press, the printer, which ended the session 14p stronger at 241½p, just a shade below its high for 1996.

An upbeat statement to shareholders at the annual meeting lifted McCarthy & Stone 6p to 114½p.

■ GILT-EDGED: The London bond market recovered from some early falls on the back of strong mark-up among US Treasury bonds.

The March series of the long gilt finished £16 higher at £1092½ after touching a low of £1091½.

Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 1½p to £103½, but shorter dated issues were subdued ahead of today's monthly economic meeting. Treasury 8 per cent 1999 was one tick lower at 98½p.

■ NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks showed solid gains in early trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 38.49 points at 6,747.57.

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THE
TIMESCITY
DIARY

Advertisement's potent brew

SCOTTISH COURAGE will need to live up to its name. The brewery is in trouble after the Advertising Standards Authority upheld complaints from the European Commission, the European Movement and an MEP that its national advertising campaign was misleading.

The tongue-in-cheek advertisement featured Brussels sprouts arranged in a circle, underneath the headline "Keep them out of our BIER". It reads: "Things used to be simple... But now we have Brussels. Well-meaning chaps - but perhaps little zealous... They're even looking at the merits of standardising the way we brew our bier... Your Beck's is not your Beck's... Because in their infinite wisdom Brussels has decreed that all bier must now be brewed with an inferior standardised water." According to the ASA, the advertisement, distorted the present position. Not to mention the political balance...

Hot water?

ROBERT FARRELL the Merrill Lynch investment guru is not afraid to put his dignity where his money is. To illustrate his view that the US market is overheating, fund managers were yesterday presented with a picture of a nearly naked Farrell emerging from a hot tub in a boat on the Thames. "It's a sign of the top of the market; not the bottom, or I would have turned around," he beamed.



It's a very cheap call - I'm ringing Sweden'

DAVID "Eager" Beever just can't be stopped. The recently appointed chairman of KPMG Corporate Finance was yesterday made a non-executive director at TIS, the vehicle rental company. Peter Roberts, TIS group chief executive, and Beever go back a long way - they share a passion for beer.

Seeking funds

WHISTLEBLOWING by City pension fund professionals such as auditors and accountants may well be *de rigueur*. But where does the average employee go? Public Concern at Work, the independent charity based in London, may be the answer. In three years it has received 4,000 inquiries on such issues as company fraud and public safety. Now the charity has run out of funding and needs a new sponsor to replace the Barings Foundation.

Price in touch

NEWS OF SINGER & Friedlander's decision to team up with former footballer Alan Hansen is of little interest to Charles Price. The recently appointed head of S&F's banking and treasury divisions has thighs only for rugby; he coaches a team of under 19s in Woodford. Price's move from NM Rothschild & Sons coincides with a successful spate on the rugby field. Last weekend his lads won the first round of the Essex Cup.

AN unfortunate gaffe for Leeds Group. In its directors' report, the textile group refers to "excruciating" dates of options outstanding at the end of the year. Most unpleasant.

MORAG PRESTON



White said to be interested in Bradford and Bingley Stewart may find a white knight to be partner Dickinson: will concentrate on mortgage lending

Mutual with muscle aims to be bank with big ideas

Marianne Curphey on the flotation of the Halifax and fellow building societies

In a matter of months, the Halifax Building Society will be transformed from a 145-year-old sleepy mutual into a high-profile FTSE company. It will face the scrutiny of stock market accounting. As it prepares for the conversion, its eight million borrowers and savers will be receiving a transfer document outlining the details of flotation and how much each can expect to receive in free shares.

Halifax is coming to the stock market with £3 billion of surplus capital to spend. It has a long shopping list and its track record and reputation in the City give it the muscle to make some big acquisitions. On its list will be life and general insurance businesses, plus leasing and treasury. The latter two operations have been lucrative for another building society turned bank, the Abbey National.

On the insurance side, Halifax is at present digesting its acquisition of Clerical Medical, the life mutual. As the purchase has not satisfied the society's appetite for a bigger chunk of the long-term savings market and Halifax is watching closely the remaining annual insurers, among them Friends Provident, Scottish Widows, Scottish Amicable, Standard Life, Scottish Provident, NPI and Scottish Life.

With a right issue, even a major insurance player such as Commercial Union, currently worth £4.7 billion and rumoured to have considered a tie-up with BAT Industries, would not be beyond Halifax's grasp. Alternatively, buying could comprise insurers such as General Accident, worth £2.7 billion, or Legal & General could prove fruitful for both parties.

Halifax is regarded in the Square Mile as the best managed and most tightly run building society and has come top of UBS's league table for its financial performance for the past two years. It is big enough to buy an insurer and keep the brand name and current management — two important considerations for the board of any mutual it approaches.

Its fellow building societies that also plan flotation this summer — Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich — are unlikely to offer similar benefits. Both have been struggling to form alliances in the run-up to flotation, but approaches to smaller building societies and mutual insurers have been rebuffed so far.

Alliance & Leicester, where Peter White is chief executive, is rumoured to be interested in acquiring the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, which so far has declared itself strongly mutual, plus a mutual insurer, perhaps Friends Provident, Scottish Provident, or Scottish Widows. But its aggressive reputation has frightened off some potential partners, and it is generally perceived to be too small to be attractive. A

merger or takeover involving the Woolwich, where John Stewart is chief executive, and another society would almost certainly lead to job losses, loss of the mutual's brand name and board, and the closure of one head office.

The alternative, a hostile bid, would require the A&L to appeal directly to the members of the building society it had set its sights on via the national press. Such a strategy worked for the Abbey National as it prepared to acquire the National & Provincial Building Society, but such tactics are expensive and do not always work. In addition, although championing the benefit of mutuality only weeks before it fell into the arms of Abbey, the N&P was widely regarded in the City as being effectively up for sale.

A similar problem afflicts the Woolwich. It is not big enough to be an attractive parent to a smaller mutual, but does face the prospect of being taken over by a bigger company. Talks with the Prudential, the UK's biggest name in life and pensions, appear to have founded, but new legislation in the Building Societies Bill may make Woolwich and A&L more vulnerable.

At present, building societies that convert to banks are protected from hostile bids for five years. The Bill proposes that protection be removed if they make hostile bids for other companies in the financial services field. They are protected if they grow only through friendly

mergers. In addition, under the proposed legislation, a shareholder in the newly floated society can build up a 10 per cent stake and then call a special general meeting at which it can ask other shareholders to vote to veto the five-year protection rule. If they agree, the 10 per cent shareholder can then launch its own takeover bid. This could therefore lay converting societies open to hostile bids.

However, the Woolwich and A&L may feel that with the prospect of a general election in May, the Conservatives have more pressing issues than the intricacies of building society legislation and the Bill has no parliamentary slot. Alternatively, they may find white knights to be friendly partners before they become quoted.

The market will be dominated this year by the three floats, estimated to be worth more than £17 billion. A&L is expected to come to market in late April or May and the Woolwich in July. The Halifax, which has taken more than two-and-a-half years to come to market, will convert in June, subject to confirmation by the Building Societies Commission and other approvals.

A fourth, smaller player, is also planning flotation. Northern Rock, of which Robert Dickinson is chairman, has a distinctly northern and more cautious client base. It has indicated that it does not share the ambitions of the other three to become huge



Top team at the Halifax: from left, Mike Blackburn, chief executive, Jon Founds, chairman, and Roger Boyes, the finance director

personal financial services shops. It intends to concentrate on mortgage lending and the associated general and life insurance products that can be sold at the same time as a home loan.

Rob Thomas, an analyst with UBS, believes Northern Rock shares and those of the other three converting societies will be attractive in the next few years if the housing market remains as buoyant as predicted.

Meanwhile, as NatWest looks for another life mutual and Barclays is informally talking to insurers, including Norwich Union, Lloyds TSB has been quietly transforming itself into a highly focused retail bank.

This is the competition that Woolwich and the other converting societies should have their eye on. The successful purchase by Lloyds of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society and the building up its life business is a clever strategy. It has eschewed the investment banking option that NatWest Bank is currently so keen to pursue and instead is believed to be looking for a purchase that would increase its 25 per cent share of the mortgage market.

The flotation will lift share ownership in the UK by a third to 12 million, higher even than the peak of individual investing in the boom years of the Eighties. Many of these investors will sell their shares almost immediately by post and will they be snapped up by the big City institutions. Halifax is conducting research to try to establish how many members will sell shares and will offer a postal dealing service. Halifax shares in particular will be sought by index-tracking funds when it enters the FTSE 100 index, although a question mark remains over when.

When Abbey National bought the National & Provincial Building Society in August last year, 78 per cent of N&P's 665,000 savers who were given the choice of shares or cash opted for cash. The remaining 22 per cent took shares. A further 446,000 did not have the choice and were given shares. Four months on, more than 90 per cent retain their shares.

David Gilchrist, Halifax's corporate communications manager, believes other societies will in time follow Halifax's path to market. "We believe mutuality is a narrow focus," he said. "The original mutuals were formed from a group of people who came together for a common purpose and when that purpose had been served they were wound up. It is up to the members of the remaining mutuals whether they want to see the benefits of mutuality — slightly higher savings rates and slightly lower mortgage rates. However, some of the keenest competitors in the market place are not mutuals but plc's."



ANTHONY HARRIS

EMU: looking for hidden agendas

"It now seems likely that we will never again see interest rates raised by the Bundesbank or by the Bank of France. These economies are so far lagging the cycle that the next rise could be left to the proposed European Central Bank."

But why stop at delay? It used to be generally assumed that the economic case for monetary union — "completing the single market" — was self-evident; but not any more. Indeed, a friend in the consultancy world rang me last week with a new problem. He wanted to arrange an EMU debate for clients, but he had yet to find a speaker willing to state a rational economic case for the project. The problem is troubling some American analysts, too: so they are beginning to look for hidden agendas. Here is one from California, and one of my own.

Tracy Herrick, whose reports are circulated by Jeffries, a big Los Angeles-based broker-dealer, finds political explanations even for events that look purely financial — stock market swings, for example. (Current second terms nearly always cause sharp equity corrections.) EMU finds him ready: it is all about oil. Europe, he argues, used to rely on the US to safeguard its Middle East supplies. But these are now threatened by Islamic fundamentalists, especially in Saudi Arabia. That threat has been on the agenda of such groups as the World Business Forum for years. But America looks less willing, and probably less able, to handle it.

Where to turn? America, says Herrick, looks south — the Mexican Gulf, perhaps the Falklands. But for Europe the defensible fallback is Russia, which may be unable to keep internal order. So Europe needs military clout; but Germany is unable, under its constitution, to provide it. A European army would require political integration; the operation of EMU would lead there. A kind of Russian doll — a Trojan horse, money as a mask for politics as a mask for rearmament. Far-fetched, maybe, but the problem is real, so it is surely worth a thought.

My own more modest candidate: pensions. The European pensions crisis will need such unpopular answers, by way of higher taxes and lower benefits, that the continent needs a scapegoat. EMU qualifies.

But invent your own. These are deep waters, Watson.

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Business leaders at the CBI suggest that unemployment will drop to 1.7 million by the end of next year

the 50-plus age group, the rate of fall among men, at 19.3 per cent, is close to double the female fall of 10.9 per cent. Even so, unemployment rates vary markedly by age: 14.9 per cent for people aged 18 to 24, 6.5 per cent for the 30 to 39 age group and 1.4 per cent among the over 60s.

In the main, over the past year, unemployment has fallen more rapidly in the more prosperous areas of the Midlands and the South than in the

more peripheral regions. It is down 16.3 per cent in the South East, 16.7 per cent in the South West and 15.4 and 16 per cent in the West and East Midlands respectively. At the same time, it has fallen 9.9 per cent in Wales and 7.2 per cent in Scotland.

But the pattern is far from clear. The North, for instance, has seen a fall of 15.5 per cent, while the 11.9 per cent drop in Northern Ireland has forced its overall unemployment rate to below 10 per cent for the first time since the early 1980s.

On average, unemployment is lower in Labour areas than in Conservative constituencies. In Conservative constituencies, unemployment is on average 3.372, compared with 2.570 in Labour seats and 1.277 in those held by the LibDems.

But unemployment is now falling about half as fast again in Conservative seats as in Labour seats. In the 12 months to October, Conservative unemployment fell by 12.700 and Labour's by about 9.600 — a decline in Conservative areas of 13 per cent, compared with 9 per cent in Labour areas.

Unemployment remains

Shares close at best of day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Who will speak for the Principality?

Ballykissangel, Father Ted, Cracker, Hamish Macbeth, McCallum... surely something is missing? Every Celtic accent seems to go down a treat with the British viewing public except the liltin Welsh. Blame Neil Kinnock, blame Dylan Thomas, blame Lloyd George.

There is a firm belief in the Principality that there is a national prejudice against the Welsh accent. Television producers in particular feel that it is harder for Wales to get programmes on the national networks.

Bad enough when the enemy is over the borders, but worse if it is within. Which is the principal broadcaster for Wales? A battle for the honour is raging between BBC Wales and S4C, the Welsh counterpart of Channel 4, and BBC Wales is losing.

Proof of S4C's ascendancy under the aegis of its ambitious chairman, Prys Edwards, came with the appointment last month of the new BBC governor for Wales. For the first time, this worthy figure will not have a seat on the board of S4C as well. The new man to hold the slightly diminished but still desirable (at £16,330) part-time job is Roger Spencer Jones, the chairman of the Council of Welsh Training and Enterprise Councils. Not reappointed as governor was the controversial Tory Dr Gwyn Jones, whose term expired at the end of the year. Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, apparently was willing to renew him but the Welsh Office was not.

In November the Broadcasting Council for Wales, which oversees BBC Wales, pleaded with Mrs Bottomley to think again about the S4C link. The BBC Welsh governor has always sat on S4C's board because of BBC Wales' statutory obligation to make for S4C ten hours a week of programmes in the Welsh language. Last year this gift (paid for by your licence fee and mine) was worth £17.3 million.

She did not relent. On December 13, Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC's Chairman, wrote to her to voice his disappointment. Looking ahead to the future when BBC Wales and S4C might each operate separate digital commercial channels (the ostensible reason for the removal of the BBC's man from the S4C board), he said "it would be a grave mistake" if BBC Wales were to come to be regarded "as being somehow less Welsh" than S4C.

But Welshness costs money. BBC Wales is much the poorer of the two. Siân Pedwar Cymru, to give it the name with which its operators answer the telephone, has £72 million a year to spend on one television channel aimed exclusively at Wales. In contrast, BBC Wales has £49.6 million a year to finance Radio Wales plus two television channels which it fondly hopes,



BRENDA MADDOX

will sometimes be national in its reach. Declaring my interest once again, (Welsh husband, Welsh house), I very much hope that BBC Wales will get more on the national network this year than last year's measly eight hours. One has to remember that not everything made by BBC Wales sounds Welsh, such as Jan Morris's recent travel documentaries. There's some good stuff on the way from Cardiff, including *Tiger Bay* and *Drovers Gold*. May one of them catch on.

Poor Carlton television. Just when it thought it was going to shed its reputation for vulgarity, it came up with *The Monarchy - A Nation Decides*. Watching this was like watching the social-climbing matron spoil her big night out by drinking from the finger-bowl. This rich, unloved ITV company will have to scale to the populist medal unless it enlists the services of a professional image-changer. But not Max Clifford.

The Prince of Wales has made a more original choice for his make-over wizard. He has snared for his new press secretary the young (well, 30) man who quietly turned the Press Complaints Commission around and let all the credit go to the commission chairman, Lord Wakeham (now reappointed until 1999).

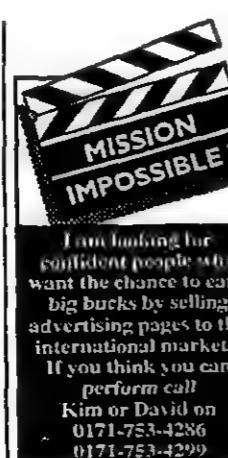
The skilled and discreet Mark Bolland, director of the PCC from 1991 to mid-1996, managed to quieten cries for new legislation to curb the press and to make the PCC seem capable of being dealt with, while keeping the newspapers in line.

In moving to accentuate the positive side of the Prince, Bolland and crew are on the right track. They could make more of one of his greatest assets: to speak English beautifully. They might help further by reminding the heir to the throne of that wise tip from John Kennedy's book: never put on a funny hat. When given one by whomever—cowboys, Boy Scouts, emirs or Maoris—the trick is to admire it, hold it up for the photographers, then hand it over to your press secretary.

As I sat in my Welsh fastness over the holidays, nothing on television entertained me more than BBC2's documentary on the peregrine falcon, which we can watch from start to finish, ears erect, nose up against the screen, head swivelling to follow the action. It was a kind of pornography for pets—naked chicks pecking their way out of shells, hawks tearing at raw pigeon meat. Our cat also dashes across the room to watch the Famous Grouse commercial. Are petfood manufacturers, I wonder, directing their advertising at the right target?

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THE LISTENER

THE NEWS BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Chris Tarrant, Capital Radio's star presenter, signed a three-year contract reported to be worth £3 million.

IN A rare coup, the BBC has poached Rebecca Segal, from BSkyB. Ms Segal, an American, has for four years acted as the satellite television company's eyes and ears in the United States. She will now be charged with spotting potential US acquisitions, marketing BBC programmes in America and identifying new co-production opportunities for the Beeb.



Edward: New Orleans trip

FIRST aid

HIGH STREET charity shops

could be in for a bonanza, thanks to cost-conscious LWT programme-makers, who turned to a local Oxford store when seeking props for *Stayin' Alive*, its cut-price nurses drama series, which made its debut last October.

The strategy clearly worked because the series moves next week to production of a 13-part sequel, despite achieving what can only charitably be called average ratings of six million, and a peak of 7.5 million at 8pm on Fridays.

The fact that the programme has been recommissioned is itself significant, suggesting that LWT is now prepared to give promising series a second chance, and an opportunity to develop, even if they have not scored high ratings first time around. The view at the Network Centre is that because the show was up against hot competition from the BBC's *Shooting Stars*, its ratings were reasonable.

The new series will most likely reappear on Saturday nights, in pursuit of stay-at-home women viewers.

Skinner: a Capital job?

his hand as a disc jockey. He is body tipped to be offered a show on Capital Gold should the station succeed in its bid for the single remaining and much-covered local radio FM slot in London. Twenty-five consortiums are competing for the licence, which will be awarded by the Radio Authority tomorrow at 5pm.

Capital Gold is promising to beef up its humour content by recruiting Skinner and "big names" if it is allowed to move from its current crackly AM frequency.

As for Skinner, he presumably, is hoping to beef up his bank balance—last year

Perhaps overseas audiences will appreciate a screening of

Spending to save money

SOME PEOPLE might think that adfolk already have enough corporate benefits, but now a loyalty card enabling them to claim discounts at their favourite eateries, bars and emporiums has been launched.

The card, called the Advantage Card, boasts a membership of 100 top advertising haunts in Soho, Covent Garden and Paddington. These include restaurants such as the Gay Hussar, Chez Gérard and L'Etoile, a Shabby Sheep in Paddington, a Charlotte Street dry-cleaners and even a car park at Heathrow. Thus adfolk can eat, drink and shop to even greater excess, happy in the knowledge that they are saving money.

AFTER MUCH treifal negotiation with the BBC, BT has launched its long-awaited campaign featuring 11 former *EastEnders* actors and ac-

tresses. The commercial has Letitia Dean, alias Sharon, phoning other stars such as Leslie Grantham (Dixie Den) and Tony Watt (Lofty) to organise a get-together. It is aimed at promoting BT's Friends and Family scheme, which now offers a discount on ten numbers rather than just five.

Apparently, the problem concerned the stars appearing in character, touching on the age-old theory issue of breach of copyright.

ONE admiral is doing his bit to prove that the industry does have a social conscience. Simon Tuke, a copywriter at Mellors Reay & Partners, which is based in Finsbury, Soho, wants to set up a scheme for leftover food from the area's restaurants and sandwich bars

to be redistributed to the homeless.

To get things started, he is planning a fundraising party. "Agencies might think that times are hard, but in relative terms they are obviously very prosperous organisations," he says.

DISPENSING news for politicians: it seems they may be fair game for admen. The Freedom Association complained about an advertisement in *Tribune* for a T-shirt bearing a picture of the Prime Minister and the words "Wanted. For indecency and sexism. The Grey Man". Approach with cynicism. The association claimed that the ad sought to damage Mr Major's credibility and was in breach of the Advertising Standards Authority's rules on protection of privacy. But the ASA ruled that the portrayal of Mr Major was not one that readers would find adverse.

John Major fair game for admen

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مكتبة من الأصل

Hello! fights to stay top

Hello!'s most successful issue was Gazza's wedding. Carol Midgley says royals might be faded out to beat off growing competition

Last year was a peculiar one for Maggie Koumi, the much lampooned editor of *Hello!* magazine. In the space of six months she achieved record sales, managed to fall out with her international interview-guru, the Marquesa de Valera, and ended 1996 by spectacularly admitting to a roomful of rival editors that she personally would not have given coffee-table space to *Hello!*'s most successful issue ever — Paul Gascoigne's wedding.

This year also promises to be a defining one for *Hello!* and for the rest of the celebrity magazine market. In 1996 three new titles — *Here!, Now and Enjoy* — emerged and *OK!* transformed from a monthly to a weekly, resulting in five magazines scrabbling for a bite of the pie. Latest circulation figures suggest that only *Hello!* and *OK!* have significantly put on sales, and 1997 seems set for a head-to-head between the two titles, both of which claim to be the best friend of the rich and famous.

Industry insiders are especially interested to see precisely how *Hello!* will fight off the new pretender to its throne. Last year Koumi made no secret of the fact that she thought the Gazza showcase was too downmarket for a *Hello!* front cover, even though it sold almost 650,000 copies — an all-time high. (Soon afterwards, the Marquesa, who set up the deal, announced she was leaving.)

It is particularly intriguing to see that last week's issue of *Hello!* features not a royal christening or an aristocrat's engagement party — the trademark of the *Hello!* we know and love — but the wedding of an actor from *Brookside*, the Channel 4 soap opera.

"The *Brookside* cast celebrate the wedding of John 'Bing' Burgess," trumpets the front-page headline heralding eight pages of glossy photographs of the entire cast: John Burgess, 63, in tells us plays *Brookside*'s "well-intentioned busbody" David Crosbie.

But is it really the stuff we have come to expect from *Hello?* "Brookside" is a very good, hard-hitting soap about the lives of several families in Liverpool," said one insider. "It is watched by about six million people a week but I would guess that very few of them are traditional readers of *Hello!*"

It could also be that Koumi has started to listen to the critics. Last year the paparazzi



Hello! is still the cream of the crop, but is it going downmarket in order to fight off competition from the five other celebrity magazines?

z's favourite Ulrika Jonsson popped up to tell *The Guardian* she was bored with the aristocratic profile of *Hello!* and preferred *OK!* ("OK! has more accessible people and a more down-to-earth style than *Hello!*," she said).

S aron Ring, editor of *OK!*, not surprisingly agrees with her — so much so that she turned her words into a full-page advert for the magazine.

"*Hello!* broke the mould. It was the first celebrity magazine with great colour photos but we feel it has lost the edge," said Ring. "Our strength is that we concentrate on the famous people that the public really cares about and not necessarily Prince Joachim of Denmark."

Ring, who took over as editor last autumn, added: "Look at our most successful edition ever. The cover featured pictures of Michelle Collins (Cindy Beale from *EastEnders*) with her new baby, and they were great pictures which our readers loved because she was someone they could identify with.

We also had a call from Diana, Princess of Wales. asking us to do a story on one of her favourite charities, the Lighthouse Trust, and we were allowed access to the Princess. She is very aware that we are a highly popular magazine whereas a while ago she only had *Hello!*

"We believe we have made our mark. In a recent episode of *Absolutely Fabulous* Joanna Lumley talked about *Hello!* and *OK!* fighting it out for pictures of Saffron's wedding. People now put us in the same bracket as *Hello!*. The only thing I envy them is their circulation figures. I know that there is division within the magazine at the moment and a lot of staff are unhappy. To be honest I was amazed when Maggie Koumi said that she never bought the Paul Gascoigne edition. I have never before heard an editor saying she wouldn't buy her own magazine."

Koumi, while apparently taking little pleasure in the Gascoigne scoop, recognised its commercial value and made the decision to run it after the Marquesa clinched the deal through the couple's hairdresser.

Hello! is still very much the cream of the crop with regard to circulation. Its average weekly sales are just below

half a million and it has eight more pages than *OK!* But it has been accused of scraping the barrel for interviews (Barbi Benton, Sarah Biasini, Joaquin Cortes and Henrietta Spinck have been cited as examples) and *OK!* is regarded by many critics as looking fresher and more modern than the *Hello!* format.

OK! sells fewer than 200,000 copies a week but latest figures show it has increased by 90 per cent.

Ring said that the fact it had increased circulation when so many new titles had come on the market was crucial. "If now, *Here!* and *Enjoy!* hadn't existed I think we might have overtaken *Hello!* by now," she said.

David Durman, editor of *Now*, which is owned by IPC and calls itself "the smarter woman's weekly", said: "*Hello!* is changing in the sense that all magazines need to change over time. Just like there are probably only ten jokes in the world there are only about ten real cover stars and you cannot keep featuring them. You have to go for something new."

The Gazza cover was a real sign of the times. It was a great sale for them and whether

Maggie Koumi didn't personally like it or not is not important. It is the fact she had the good sense to put it on the front."

Jane Ennis, editor of *Here!*, launched last June by Gruner and Jahr, said the *Brookside* cover was uncharacteristic for *Hello!* "It is an odd one for them and it must have taken a lot of persuasion to get the Spanish owner (Eduardo Sanchez) to run with someone he probably had never heard of."

Both Durman and Ennis believe the market is big enough to sustain all the titles and are confident their products have a healthy future. But others are convinced that the fight for readers will bring about big changes at *Hello!*, which could mean saying "goodbye" to the Euro royals.

Thousands die, but is Diana flying out?

Our press is too insular and world news uneven, says Bridget Harrison

"HUNDREDS of immigrants disappear in the Mediterranean. Was it murder? Who even cares?" British celebrities. What relevance do the thousands crippled by antipersonnel mines in Angola have for us? Little until Diana, Princess of Wales visits them.

The paper claims to have unearthed a tragedy bordering on biblical proportions in which 280 illegal immigrants — from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka — were drowned at gunpoint by the drunk captain of their ship. Simultaneously *The Observer* suggests that readers and other newspapers will not give a damn simply because the victims were "the wrong kind of dead" — they were "acting illegally, and they were black".

The remarkable silence maintained by all of Monday's papers suggests that *The Observer* was right. News reporters outside *The Observer* justify the silence by waiting for further evidence that the story is founded on fact.

The validity of the story aside, *The Observer* raises a pertinent issue: that the insularity of the British press means that coverage of world news is highly uneven. Furthermore, if Third World people are to make the news, their stories must be several times more horrific than those of their Western counterparts.

News must be sexy. From the page it must grab the reader with a headline and interest him or her beyond the opening paragraph. Newsmakers argue that the further from the reader's mind a country is in miles or perception, the harder it becomes to engage their interest because the news topic is too far removed from his or her reality.

Foreign correspondents battling to place stories from abroad must find a relevant spin to make the

prised by disastrous events in countries that seem frequently incompetent without Western aid.

Perhaps this situation would be remedied if newsmakers equated sexiness not solely with relevance, but with the ability to capture the imagination of the reader, no matter what the subject matter.

THIS is a quality lacking in *The Observer*'s immigrant story. Skating over sketchy facts with sensationalism, the story loses much of its grit. A more sober approach, with the story run as a page lead instead might have had more serious impact than the paper's shock-horror page one treatment.

• The author has written a postgraduate thesis on the role of newsmakers in the creation of Africa's media image, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Unchecked — the rise of the ranting columnists

Keth Waterhouse is calling for a cult of columnists. He believes there are far too many of the breed writing in today's national newspapers. It should, he says, start at the younger end, "particularly with those twitting young women with very little to say who are now given so much space by editors".

Waterhouse's tongue-in-cheek demand follows the sacking of Sir Peregrine Worsthorne last week from *The Sunday Telegraph* after 36 years.

As newspapers have grown fatter and fatter, there has certainly been a proliferation of columnists. Editors are constantly seeking the new, brilliant, stylish writer who may add sales to their newspaper — and they are willing to pay a great deal of money for the right person.

Richard Littlejohn, who conducts journalistic muggings for the *Daily Mail*, is reputed to earn £100,000 a year, and Tony Parsons in *The Mirror* an estimated £150,000.

Competition pushes columnists to become ever more opinionated, less willing to examine an argument coolly and intelligently. Public figures are either heroes or villains. Too often, uninformative ranting has become the order of the day, particularly in the pop tabloids.

Dominic Lawson, Editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* and sacker of Perry



lot more to it than that."

The Daily Mail's political pundit Simon Heffer has been doing a column for some years between the two. "Every column has a natural lifespan and Perry's had run its course," he told me.

Lawson doubts that columnists actually sell extra copies of a newspaper.

Doesn't he sometimes fear a punch on the nose? "If you dish it out, you must be willing to take it so I don't mind being called a prat in other columns," he says.

"I do feel strongly about the betrayal of the people by the Conservative Government, and I think this view rings true with *Daily Mail* readers. "In January 1991, in *The Sunday Telegraph* I wrote that John Major was not up to being Prime Minister, and he has not spoken to me since. But I don't express strong opinions for effect. I write what I do because I believe it."

Waterhouse believes that standards are plummeting. To be a columnist of quality, a writer must be a practised journalist, he says.

"He should have been a reporter, an accurate collector of facts. There are too many who don't know anything or anyone. They take a cutting out of a newspaper; they don't check facts, and they just comment. There's a

says: "I am often up till four in the morning pacing around, agonising over what to write. My fear is almost like a Freudian dream. I have this notion of being naked in Oxford Street. I suppose in my column I am exposing myself to the readers. I sometimes write a sentence seven or eight times to make it easy to read."

Alan Coren of *The Times* has some sympathy for Terry. "The problem with humorous writing is that you never know if anyone is laughing. You must assess your audience accurately more than any other columnist. I try to think of *The Times'* readers as my peers, chaps like Waterhouse."

"I am the kind of Terry Waite or John McCarthy of popular journalism. I bang away on the radiator not knowing whether anyone out there is picking it up."

Worsthorne agrees that the spread of columnists may be out of control. "When I started in newspapers ... opinion was expressed in leaders and editorials, anonymously."

For all the current provocation, however, few readers' letters are published disagreeing with columnists. Could it be that the modern reader has worked out that many of the over-the-top statements are not to be taken too seriously? They are simply part of the growth of the info-tainment sector of the newspaper industry.

The gentler columnists who specialise in wit and humour seem to suffer from more self-doubt and angst about their offerings than what I shall call the ranters.

Peter Tory of *The Express*

As part of our New Year New Career series *A The Times*, in association with Savile & Holdsworth, international leaders in assessing individuals and jobs, gives you a unique opportunity to receive your personal profile absolutely free. The three-page questionnaire was inserted in Monday's newspaper.

An interview used alone compares poorly with a selection process that uses more than one assessment method. This is why questionnaires, such as *The Times* personal profile, ability tests and management exercises, are used by more and more organisations, together with the interview in a "multi method" approach, often known as an assessment centre.

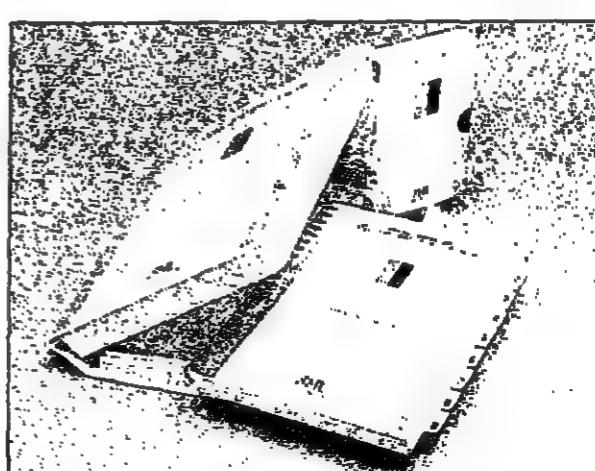
This provides a wealth of information about a range of skills such as numeric and verbal reasoning, oral communication, approach to teamwork and leadership potential, specific to the role, information crucial to help the employer make the best possible match between candidates and the demands of the job.

The interview, however, is valuable when conducted effectively, providing an opportunity for candidate and employer to discuss how information from different sources fits together.

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If you would like a questionnaire and missed Monday's paper please call 0171 481 3377. Lines are open 9.00am to 3pm.

CHANGING TIMES



THEATRE 1
Wave goodbye to \$10 million: a new book chronicles the perils of mounting a big musical



THEATRE 2
A Hong Kong boy's trials in an English public school receive mythic treatment in *New Territories*

THE TIMES ARTS



OFFER
Fascinating Aida, and scintillating prices: see the Theatre Club panel (below) for details



TOMORROW
How does Whitney Houston rate in *The Preacher's Wife*? Read Geoff Brown's review of the new movies

JOHN MARCUS/CAROL ROSE

How to go for a song and lose a fortune

Benedict Nightingale on the hard work that goes into a flop musical

According to the director Mike Ockrent, it is like swimming through shark-infested waters with a bleeding toe. For the designer Robin Wagner, it means fitting together a thousand moving parts, any one of which may fail and force you to start again. An enterprise he compares to dancing on a bowl of bubbling soup which boils over when you least expect it. For the librettist Larry Gelbart, it is like house-training a dinosaur. Surely there is no genre more likely to drive people to frenzy, despair or out-right similes than the large-scale musical.

All these quotes come from Barbara Isenberg's fascinating log of the creation of *Big*, a musical that played for a few months on Broadway last year, costing and losing its backers more than \$10 million. Although published in America, *Making It Big* (Limelight, £25) tells a tale that crosses national boundaries. It would certainly provoke wry smiles from Cameron Mackintosh, who recently reworked and relaunched *Martin Guerre*, or Andrew Lloyd Webber, who has just postponed the Broadway opening of his *Whistle Down the Wind* in order to rejig it, or Garry Drabinsky, who introduced new methods into the making of *Ragtime*, the \$10 million musical that opened last month in his native Toronto.

What Drabinsky did was organise "focus groups", in which members of the public joined people from the industry, watched workshop perfor-

mances of *Ragtime* and gave their reactions. This is a technique borrowed from Hollywood, where movies often change as a result of previews, and it had its creative effects in Toronto. For instance, more was made of Houdini and Evelyn Nesbit, two of the real-life characters in E.L. Doctorow's original novel, and more ragtime music was introduced.

But was there a danger of transferring creative control from Terrence McNally, Stephen Flaherty and their colleagues to some lowest common denominator of public taste? "No," Drabinsky says. "Generally what it did was confirm our own suspicions about what needed fine-tuning. But you can get so close to a show you lose perspective. And when 50 people tell you the same thing you have to say, wait a minute, maybe there's something to do. It's a lot cheaper than rushing around making changes when you're blasted by the critics."

Even so, some American critics felt that Doctorow needed further doctoring before the musical makes what my own eyes and ears tell me will be a successful transfer to Broadway later this year. As Mackintosh emphasises, and the makers of *Big* discovered the hard way, there is a vast gap between a nice performance in a rehearsal room and a show complete with sets, costumes and full orchestra. "There is no magic formula," Mackintosh says. "Hit musicals come from a myriad of start-ups and often from left-field."

But Mackintosh does think it is a pity that, at least in England, pre-London runs for big musicals are becoming a thing of the past. Had he opened *Martin Guerre* in Manchester, as he had

planned, he would doubtless have seen that the plot was less coherent and well-motivated than it needed to be. As it was, the radical improvements he made cost £1 million and made Horner's demands on the cast, who rehearsed one *Martin Guerre* while playing another.

The evidence of *Big* is that workshops can jolt even the professionals into a false sense of security and that regional try-outs can mend but, finally, not make. Maybe there was something flawed in the very notion of giving the Broadway treatment to the Tom Hanks movie about the 12-year-old who finds himself in a grown-up body, job and relationship, maybe not. But the producer who warned that *Big* was too big for the theatre was right. The one who said he had never

found capital easier to raise, and persistently delayed optimism, was sadly wrong.

Without its month in Detroit

Big would have been a famous fiasco, instead of

what I found it, a diverting show in sometimes dubious taste. There were vast, complex sets, 431 different sound, lighting and design cues, and 220 costumes for a cast of 31. There were elaborate props, most ominously a \$100,000 piano with multicoloured lights

meant to flash in sync with performers dancing on its keys. That often went wrong in Detroit, but then so did almost everything else.

Was it a coincidence that a

convention of witches was being held in the hotel where the company stayed? Probably. But previews were cancelled. Sets failed to move, slid "as if through Jello", or collided.

The men's too in a bus station scene went crashing into a toyshop. An accident on a roller-coaster put an actress in hospital. The leading man, Daniel Jenkins, had to have a knee operation. "Think Vietnam," said an actor with four fast costume changes to make.

The show's beginning and the end of each act were endlessly changed. People were told not to learn replacement songs they had just been

given because they were already being rewritten. No fewer than 41 numbers were ditched. David Stake, the lyricist, talked of "a heart being planted with the patient awake". Richard Maltby, the composer, felt like a boat being bombed. Of the vital opening song, Sirte said: "Put Richard and me in a room with a piano and three monkeys with a typewriter for the age of the universe, and it's just possible we might get it right before the monkeys type *Hamlet*."

Yet there was optimism, and a \$1.3 million marketing budget, when radically revised *Big* made a delayed Broadway opening on April 26, just before the qualification date for the 1996 Tony awards. The show got a rave review from the all-important *New York Times*, but its troubles were

not over. After reading Isenberg's book, you thank God the Olivier Awards do not obsess the British in the mad, disengaging way the Tonies do. American *Big* was not nominated for best musical, and although it ran 200 performances, never recovered from the snags.

Play director Ockrent, who sat like a hunch with his hands tied behind his back, not knowing when the next guy would whack him. Play his team, who gave months of toil to a project in which they genuinely believed. But the choreographer, Susan Stroman, drew the right conclusion when she said: "Until you have it onstage you just don't know." She might have been forgiven if she had gone further: "Play something easier, like rebuilding Russia."

A \$100,000 piano with multicoloured flashing lights; 431 sound, lighting and design cues; 220 costumes: no wonder the musical *Big* lost its Broadway backers \$10 million

THEATRE: Opening show of the London International Mime Festival

Portraiture with a cleft palette

The Belgian company Mossoux Boné (at the Purcell Room) opens the London International Mime Festival like the flap of a letterbox. Through it we see a beautiful woman, sliced off at the waist, her face in profile, one hand pointing skyward, the other playing sensually with her neck, posing as if for a portrait. The rest of the stage is smothered in black. An electronic soundtrack rumbles with industrial menace. The woman begins to twitch like a puppet on a string.

Suddenly, in a small square eight feet above her, appears the head of a medieval cleric, staring straight into the mouth of a large halibut. A clue perhaps to what is unfolding? Or merely the fact that no self-respecting mime festival can possibly be without its stuffed fish and inscrutable programme notes.

ATHE scholarship boy about to return to England after his Hong Kong holiday takes a last look at his birthplace; views are projected onto the giant white T-shirt that serves as a screen, black and white views like all the others we have seen there, but last of all comes the Union Jack in full colour. The boy stares ahead, says nothing, the lights go out.

An image of his uncertain future here in the land of the blest, blight and screw? Perhaps, but doubts as to Hong Kong's future when Peking takes possession is wrapped up in the image as well. 1997, the next production by Yellow Earth Theatre, will explore the effect of the handover on this country's Chinese community, but the exploration will need to reach greater depth than this play achieves.

David K.S. Tse created an excellent children's play, *The Magic Paintbrush* (worth looking out for on its next tour), and made a fine job at Leicester Studio recently of David Henry Hwang's strange, elegant and tough *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. But his story of a

bright boy sent from a farm in the New Territories to an English public school follows too thinly-sketched a path. Tse adds mythic weight by introducing scenes from another journey westward, that of the Monkey King and his adventures with Piggy, the Priest and one other. These are played with grace and agility, but the resemblance is little more than geographical.

The school bully (Paul Courtenay Hyu)

of Arc perhaps, flirts dangerously with a sword, one breast exposed. A woman, in an early version of a chef's hat, reclines like Manet's naked Olympia in a low, rectangular frame.

And a naked male torso, lit like marble, is caressed by two women to the sound of an amplified kazoo. Their trapped bodies and repressed desires make them sway and touch themselves with fluttering fingers.

For brief moments this animation

ed gallery can look beautiful, intriguing, even at times startling. But Mossoux Boné's efforts to use the medium of theatre to expose the limitations of painting is better as a concept than as drama.

The way the pictures are

framed, and how the subjects relate, is bereft of useful meaning. Their silky semaphores — cramped arm movements and clawing hands — is tedious rather than mysterious.

Only in the rare instances when two performers combine for a double portrait, such as the dancing nude torso of Adam and Eve, does a stray ray of wit pierce the rarefied gloom.

And only at the end, when the five performers break out of their paintings, slowly traverse the stage, and threaten to invade our space does Mossoux Boné generate a genuine frisson of confrontation. It is too little, too late. I did not see any art historians jumping out of their seats shouting Eureka!

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

Puzzling Chinese lesson

New Territories
Oval House

the desired schoolgirl and the priest, and Adrian Pang is the observant schoolboy and the dashing Monkey. Paul Tsang, the fourth member of the company, mostly sits at the percussion but sometimes sings *Mister Sandman*, totally inexplicable behaviour unless you know that the fourth pilgrim's name was Sandy.

Elsewhere Tse's production does not require esoteric knowledge and he draws attractive performances from his principals, notably the watchful gravity of Pang and the grief Lee shows in her playing of the young sister left behind in the ricefields.

The use of chairs, screens and an inverted umbrella hung with lanterns is accomplished but what actually happens to the boy in his English school — hit by bully, attracted to girl, wins prize, confused by puberty — lacks an equivalent novelty of detail to give the events a necessary freshness.

JEREMY KINGSTON

given because they were already being rewritten. No fewer than 41 numbers were ditched. David Stake, the lyricist, talked of "a heart being planted with the patient awake". Richard Maltby, the composer, felt like a boat being bombed. Of the vital opening song, Sirte said: "Put Richard and me in a room with a piano and three monkeys with a typewriter for the age of the universe, and it's just possible we might get it right before the monkeys type *Hamlet*."

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THE TIMES

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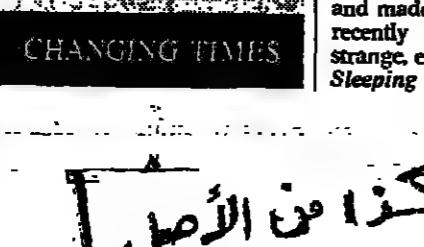
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CHANGING TIMES

■ HERITAGE

The Public Record Office that might be sold off to the nation

■ JAZZ 1.

From the virtuoso saxophonist Julian Argüelles, confirming his reputation as a top improviser

THE ARTS

■ JAZZ 2

... to the silken-voiced Christine Tobin: the Babel Festival offered a tour of the current scene

■ RISING STAR

His first film is released this year, he is directing for the BBC — and Shane Meadows is still only 23

Who should win this Victorian beauty?

HERITAGE

The V&A is the perfect suitor for the Public Record Office, says Marcus Banister

Hirst Greenwich Dock Admiralty building and now the Public Record Office. The future of this mighty Victorian pile in London's Chancery Lane is a key test of the Government's commitment to its own guidelines on the disposal of surplus historic buildings.

The PRO was built by the Victorians to house something even more important than the Stone of Scone or even the Crown Jewels. It was to be the storehouse of the very stuff of the nation's history, beginning with the Domesday Book and Magna Carta. The question now is: should the PRO be sold off to the most profitable use — barristers' chambers, perhaps, or a Knightsbridge-style "spare-note" — or can it once again become a great library and archive, which would put its thousands of miles of sturdy slate shelving straight back into the use for which they were intended?

The impetus for building the PRO came from the savage fire which destroyed the old Houses of Parliament in 1834. None of the older buildings in which the records were stored was fireproof. The site chosen was on the Rolls Estate just north of Fleet Street, but construction was repeatedly postponed as the cost of the building Parliament spiralled.

Finally in 1851, the PRO is one of those buildings where a second architect handily embellished what began as an austere building.

Sir James Pennethorne was constrained to design a utilitarian building — "Gothic of a kind true enough yet functional enough to have pleased

Pugin if he had seen it," wrote Sir Nikolaus Pevsner. It is to his successor Sir John Taylor we owe the magnificent Chancery Lane front, with its festive octagonal turrets inspired by Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey.

The PRO consists of 240 strongrooms on four floors, each with an iron door. The typical layout is a chamber 25 feet high with a spiral staircase leading to an upper level, with a grating door.

Pennethorne's biographer, Geoffrey Tyack, says that the dimensions were determined at the insistence of the London Fire Brigade. The weight of documents made it essential to use iron in the structure. But in a raging fire iron would



The mighty exterior of the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, with festive turrets inspired by Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. The former Rolls Chapel (right) would make an excellent exhibition gallery

buckle, so it was clad in brick. Even the shelves are of stone rather than wood.

The original idea had been to extend the present L-shaped building to form a quadrangle. But in the 1960s a huge increase in the number of records led to the construction of a new PRO at Kew, though the reading room at Chancery Lane remained in use until the final papers were moved to Kew.

For once, the perfect solution exists. The Victoria and Albert Museum desperately needs more space for its magnificently one-million-volume art library, not only for an extra 15,000 volumes a year, but to provide more space for readers. "We have had to become much more restrictive about issuing readers' tickets," says the librarian, Jan van der Waerden.

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The present options are expensive and short-term. They include filling in V&A light wells, excavating beneath the Prelli garden and knocking about the Henry Cole wing. By moving the library to a new site, the V&A would achieve free circulation around the main courtyard at first-floor level, and could open up the present low medieval treasury to reveal its original soaring height.

The main objection to the

move comes from the museum's own curators, 50 per cent of whom recently told the director that they want the library to stay. For them it is a fantastically convenient tool. They can browse in the stacks and take books to their offices when writing catalogues. In compensation, Waerden proposes a daily book delivery from the PRO.

Mary Jane Long, the specialist library architect retained by the V&A, says: "The PRO strongrooms provide security of valuable books without resorting to locked cases where mould can develop. The PRO's slate shelves come in every size, deep enough for the largest art books." She believes that the awkwardness of the strongroom mezzanines can be overcome. "Electric trolleys with a scissors lift could rise up to the upper level at the press of a button."

The one facility the PRO building lacks is a large 200-seat reading room, but English Heritage has agreed that this can be discreetly constructed in a sunken area to the north, now filled with huts.

The PRO's splendid octagonal reading room, which houses 30 or 40 readers, would become a library for the museum's rare books. The former Rolls Chapel, with wonderful stained glass, would make an excellent exhibition gallery devoted to the craft of the book.

The problem is that the V&A is a penniless institution de-

pendent on lottery funding, while the PRO stands on what some see as a valuable piece of real estate. PACE, the property advisers to the Civil Estates, have already neatly transformed one of the strongrooms into a prototype barristers' set, with an upper gallery for pupils. Fears of a commercial sale have been increased by the fact that under the 1857

Rolls Act the Crown Commissioners, never slow in making a bob or two, may have a stake in the property and could end up taking the lead in disposal. But the latest government guidelines (1995) state clearly that "maximisation of receipts should not be the overriding aim" with historic buildings. At the PRO a value also needs to be set on a scheme which

preserves the interior complete with its remarkable fittings, and equally on the "eco-waste" of destroying immensely durable shelving for a million or more books and no doubt paying for it all anew when the V&A eventually has to move. Even with buildings and their users, there is such a thing as a marriage made in heaven.

JAZZ: Chris Parker on the Babel Festival at Blackheath Concert Halls

Instrumental polyglots

— ensured that the pill was not oversugared.

Bromley's favourite son, Billy Jenkins, characteristically took this process to extremes with his set, featuring his Voice of God Collective supplemented by the Fun Horns of Berlin. His fractured irreverence and determined non-conformism tend to obscure his considerable musical gifts, but the time for his inimitable brand of knockabout irony might be dawning.

The Fun Horns themselves — saxophonist Thomas Klemm and Volker Schlotz, trombonist Jorg Huke and trumpeter Rainer Bremerke — range freely between Palestine, minimalism, free jazz and funk, and they opened the second day with a virtuosic but informal display.

Such uncontrived eclecti-

cism is Babel's hallmark, so the label provides a natural home for Orquesta Mahatma, a trio comprising Stuart Hall on various guitars and violin, bassist Thad Kelly and percussionist Paul Claviss. In an hour of homespun but surprisingly controlled music, they visited Brazil, Cuba and various points east, incorporating everything from gypsy to the traditional *Goldene Slumbers*.

The remainder of the festival relied heavily on the multifarious talents of the brothers Julian and Steve Argüelles, saxophonist and drummer respectively. In both a powerful quartet session featuring guitarist Mike Walker and in a duo with Steve, Julian Argüelles confirmed his reputation as one of Britain's most skilful players.

Brother Steve was featured in two widely differing contexts: the quartet Blue Moon in a Function Room, appropriately introduced as a "Home Counties wedding orchestra", and his Paris-based trio, the Recyclers. The former band features a twin-guitar front line of Billy Jenkins and Stuart Hall, along with bassist

Steve Watts, and plays anything that might be considered suitable for the functions referred to in its title. On this occasion they applied their light, wryly ironic touch to material ranging from *Tiger Rag* through a foxtrot (*Puttin' on the Ritz*) to a quickstep medley of *Lady Be Good* and *Johnny B. Goode*.

Like this quartet, the Recyclers — pianist Benoit Delbecq and guitarist Noel Akchoté — depend heavily on Argüelles's deft but pounding drumming style to centre them while they explore terrain including free improvisation, semi-abstract sound sculpture and tightly organised, occasionally almost lyrically impressionistic original compositions. They employ a variety of techniques, from prepared piano to industrial guitar noise, to achieve their extraordinary textural and rhythmic heterogeneity.

After wild adventures, singer Christine Tobin's festival-closing set, despite embracing everything from Joni Mitchell and Nina Simone songs through a deliciously smooth *Embraceable You* to her own highly innovative compositions, seemed almost conventional. In all these modes, though, she employed the silken, intimate strength of her voice to great effect, turning in a performance in which emotional depth and sophistication were unfussily conveyed by her characteristic technical prowess.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

SHANE MEADOWS

Age: 23.

Profession: Film director.

The story so far: *Small Time*, the 60-minute tale of crooks, lies and car boot sales which Meadows made in a week for just £5,000 (and acted in — he is pictured here as Jumbo, one of the leads), has been picked up by Electric Pictures for cinema release this year. The BBC has signed him to direct another of his scripts, *24/7 — The Church of Alan Darc*, with "a really big name" lined up to play the title character, who stars in a boxing club for underprivileged kids on a Midlands council estate.

A typical film-school graduate? Hardly. From the age of ten, he learnt about film by renting ten movies a week from a market trader. "The more serious side of things came when I started watching *Film on Four*. I've never had any formal training."

Directorial debut: "I made a spoof commercial at school with me as a car salesman who tries to convince a bloke to trade in his BMW for a Morris Minor. I was hailed as a star by the pupils and a nutter by the teachers."

Chequered past: "They threw me off at the end of the first year." On the dole, he worked for nothing for a film training company, in return for the loan of video equipment on which he made 25 shorts in two years.

Professional philosophy: "I'm out to make films, not money." What if someone offered him the chance to direct a \$30 million epic? "I'd rather make 50 films for a million each in lots of different genres."



DANIEL ROSENTHAL

BBC Symphony Orchestra presents

Break - Lutoslawski

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Celebrating the music of this great Polish composer Lutoslawski, with four concerts in the Barbican Hall, two concerts in St Giles, two talks and two films.

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7.30pm Barbican Hall

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Andrew Davis conductor

Saturday 18 January
7.00pm Barbican Hall

BBC National Orchestra of Wales
Mark Wigglesworth conductor

10.00pm St Giles Church, Cripplegate

BBC Symphony Chorus women's voices
Members of the BBC Symphony Orchestra
Stephen Jackson conductor

Sunday 19 January
4.30pm Barbican Hall

London Sinfonietta
Oliver Knussen conductor

7.30pm Barbican Hall

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Andrew Davis conductor

Events will also be taking place Monday 13 - Friday 17 January at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in association with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

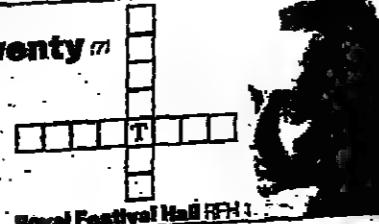
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PA to Marketing Director

The Marketing Services Group at Prodive consists of 20 staff who hold responsibility for sponsor liaison as well as corporate marketing. The Group is headed by the Marketing Director who is seeking a new PA.

The position holds great responsibility and requires the highest standard of professionalism and dedication. The environment is highly pressured and requires the ability to control multiple projects with autonomy and diplomacy.

Prodive works with major global blue-chip companies and the Marketing Director requires support from an individual with experience of conducting business at this level. The successful candidate will have some eight years experience with a strong track record as a PA at Director level. Outstanding computer and shorthand skills are essential.

Prodive's Banbury headquarters are located at junction 11 of the M40, twenty minutes from Oxford.

Apply by sending your cv including current salary details to:

Sue Brown, Human Resources Manager, Prodive Limited, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 7HS. Telephone 01285 273555

GRADUATE PA

Based London - c£24,000

An exciting opportunity exists at John Lewis' national organisation as PA to the Director of Capital Accounts who is responsible for major business development. You will have excellent customer service skills and be able to work on your own initiative. In addition you will have the aptitude to communicate and negotiate directly with all functions of the company.

Please apply in writing with full CV quoting Ref: 29105 to:

Kim Sommerville-Jones, Triangle Management Services Ltd, 10 Penn Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2LH



Small investment company specializing in Mortgages (SFA Registered) based in the West End making bright, numerate staff. PA/driver. Varied and interesting work for someone with business acumen. Attractive compensation package with bonus. Please fax details to 0171 494 1374

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR/ SECRETARY Required for a growing business company. Applications will be considered from people with excellent telephone manner. Good numeracy, shorthand and typing essential. Ideally interested in property and construction roles from senior applicants welcome. Applications in writing, with CV to Peter Henshaw, Henshaw Interiors Ltd, 100 Kingsland Road, London E8 4PH. No agencies please.

PA/SECRETARY To Managing Director £20,000 + benefits. Small medium sized financial City firm. You must have had min 3 yrs senior sec exp. Fast copy, Basic Excel, Word & Windows. C.V. to fax No. 0171 929 2616.

Wanted.....

for the growing firm of head hunters with a large international client base, someone to join our successful support team, working in an atmosphere that is informal, lively and often hectic.

The ideal person should have a pleasant telephone manner, basic secretarial skills and a good working knowledge of windows. Training will be given on all other in-house systems.

We want someone with a high level of commitment to both their own career development and that of the company; ideally, you will have plenty of team spirit and be willing to work hard and become a valued member of our organization.

Starting salary £12,000 with early reviews - the right person will move up to £14,000 within 3 months. Hours 9.30am - 6.30pm.

For more information please call Julie McCarthy on 0171 404 4039 Diamond House, 37-38 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8PW

Secretary

Small friendly insurance firm requires secretary for Managing Director. Good all rounder providing administrative skills with smart presentation, good telephone manner and skilled in W4W 6.0 with 65 w.p.m. Salary £15,000 per annum. Please fax C.V. to Lorna Chetwynd at Devon Graveline Group, 6979 Mark Lane, London E8 7BS. Fax number: 0171 485 2727. (No Agencies).

TRILINGUAL PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

c. 22k + benefits West London

One of Europe's leading niche insurance companies, Consolidated Financial Insurance, specialises in the development and marketing of creditor insurance products through financial institutions. Due to the rapid growth in the business, we are looking for two bilingual PA's to work in the Global Insurance Venture Division.

The successful candidates will be involved in the normal day to day PA duties as well as undertaking other projects.

You will need the following qualifications and experience

- to succeed in either of these challenging roles:

Fluency in at least two additional European languages

Educated to at least A Level standard

20 years

Excellent knowledge of Word, Excel and Powerpoint

Strong organisational skills and a professional approach

High energy levels and the ability to work under pressure

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

At least two years similar experience, preferably with a

flexible, remunerating and influencing ability

As part of G&P Capital we are able to offer an excellent remuneration package and first class benefits to include on-site gymnasium and subsidised staff restaurants.

Please write, with full CV, including current salary details to: Jo Tucker, Human Resources, Consolidated Financial Insurance, Vantage West, Great West Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9AG.

CPI is an equal opportunities employer.

Not connected with the English company of a similar name.

**PA to Managing Director/ Office Manager****'Outstanding Opportunity'**

London

circa £22,000 + p.share

Europe's largest broadcast consultancy requires an experienced PA to the MD of this fast growing international organisation. You will be a highly organised, articulate individual able to provide a first rate secretarial service. You will also be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of a multi-faceted and often hectic office. Experience as a Director level is a must as are good skills including full conversance with Microsoft Office and Powerpoint.

This challenging role includes complete involvement in the development of the business and is an outstanding opportunity for a confident, bright individual to be a part of a dynamic growing organisation in the media field.

Applications in writing to Julie Clarke
Bullion International Ltd
5/6 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

PA TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT FINANCE

c£30,000+ pkg(inc.overtime & bonus)

Age 30-35
The office is high-powered, small (6 executives), located in Victoria, and primarily developing major projects, particularly in Asia.

The position combines heavy and sophisticated word processing and presentations, dealing with different cultures, and the full range of PA functions including complex travel arrangements. There is pressure and tight deadlines across time zones, a 47 hour week plus some late evening and weekend work.

Candidates must have first class W4W6 and shorthand skills (60/100), A levels, be highly computer literate with Powerpoint experience, have relevant large and small company experience, and be a team player with energy, commitment and flexibility.

Please fax letter, demonstrating how these requirements are met, and full CV including present salary to Mr R Mathrani, Vanguard Capital on 0171 584 8595.

Mercedes-Benz Finance Ltd.**BI-LINGUAL PERSONAL ASSISTANT**

Reporting to the Managing Director of Mercedes-Benz Finance, you will be engaged in a range of administrative duties including organising travel, managing post and correspondence, preparing Board Papers, International liaison and providing support to the Regional Office team.

Applicants should be fluent in English and German as well as having a good command of another main European language. Candidates should also be computer literate, with 40 wpm typing and knowledge of Word, Power point and Excel. Previous experience in a Financial Services Company would be advantageous but is not essential.

If you are interested in applying, please send a comprehensive CV together with an indication of current salary, to: Janina Pownall, Mercedes-Benz Finance Ltd., Marlowe Court, Sunrise Parkway, Linford Wood, Milton Keynes MK14 6YR. Please quote Ref: PA/JP.

Secretary/PA to the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor (Sir Brian Follett) is the senior academic and administrative officer in the University. His present secretary is retiring on 30 April 1997, and the University is seeking to replace her from around the same date. Applicants should be able to demonstrate first class secretarial skills, with the ability to work on their own initiative and with minimal supervision. A degree and/or previous experience in a relevant University post would be an advantage.

Salary will be at an appropriate point on the Grade 6 scale:

£16,410 - £19,028 pa (under review).

Applications and further particulars from the Personnel Office, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL (tel 01232 523683). Please quote reference 2510C/96.

Closing date for applications 30 January 1997.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**Education Unit - Administrator**

£12,500 - £13,000 per annum

If you have proven administrative experience and strong secretarial skills coupled with an interest in Ballet or Education you are the person we are looking for.

This is a central role in the Education Unit providing full administrative support to the Education Team. Previous experience of Word and a clean driving licence would be an advantage.

Please send covering letter and CV to:

Rachel Seghers (Ref: rs/AEU), Personnel Manager,

English National Ballet, Markova House, 39 Jay Mews,

London SW7 2ES. Closing date for applications 31/1/97

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You are an experienced and capable legal secretary who can provide top quality secretarial and administrative support including the rapid and efficient production of accurate documents and letters etc. You will have a minimum of 3 yrs experience and be fluent in English. You will enjoy working independently, using initiative and be thoroughly conversant with MS Office Professional 95 and E. Mail.

Please send a comprehensive CV together with a covering letter stating your current salary to Joseph Neary by fax on 0171 739 2048

SECRETARY/OFFICE MANAGER

For Director of small W1 property company. Good shorthand, WordPerfect 6 and spreadsheet skills required. Flexibility and experience essential. Full mature position.

Please send CV to A. Lee, 78 Conduit Street, London W1A 9TG Fax: 0171 433 2594

NO AGENCIES

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Salary: c£20,000 plus benefits

Small busy firm of Chartered Accountants require a friendly, well presented Admin Secretary/Administrator to join their team. As well as typical experience, good present secretarial skills, typing 70 wpm and a good knowledge of WordPerfect 6. Must be flexible.

Written references E Letters Enc. Letters Yesterdays, 970 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF.

Strictly no agencies please.

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We urgently require a competent, hands on person, to assist Director and Associate Director.

Excellent knowledge of W4W, Excel and Powerpoint. Keen team player, very well organised and a good sense of humour are also relevant.

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To work alongside the Chairman in a highly successful and expanding international firm of chartered accountants. The successful candidate will be a lateral thinker with the confidence, experience and social network to deal with a wide range of clients and potential investors. Previous experience in a similar role and a keen desire for the future and the flexibility to undertake occasional international travel are also essential qualities.

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John Starkey, 6-7 Buntingford Street, London WC2M 5BU

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£15,000 - £18,000 pa

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The job will involve

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clients

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Age: 21-26
to £18,000 + Bens**

This is a rare opportunity for a secretary to join the Marketing Dept. of this prestigious UK Investment Bank, assisting a senior Executive in a 1:1 PA role using your shorthand and W4W. You will deal with clients in person and by phone every day. This role has the added dimension of assisting the Events Co-ordinator in every aspect of organising functions with the possibility of occasionally attending. Skills: 80/50/windows, Please call **Kia Fenton-Smith**.

Telephone: 0171-390 7006 Fax: 0171-390 2997

**Versatile PA
Liverpool Street
c£22,000 + Bens**

This prestigious private American bank require a mature and experienced PA to support their ongoing and enthusiastic UK Chairman. The position offers great variety, as well as traditional secretarial duties you will be assisting the company accountant, utilising your administrative skills with a moderate brain. City/financial background desirable. Skills: 90/50/windows and spreadsheets. Hours: 9.00-5.30/6.00. Age indicator: late 30s+. Please call **Amanda Chesser**.

**Banking PA
Operations
c£27,000**

Prestigious European investment bank require a professional PA to support a high profile Director who is primarily responsible for staffing issues. This is an internally focused role involving extensive liaison at senior level. In addition to the secretarial support you will be organising your own projects including compiling status reports and attend management meetings. A commitment to excellence, as well as good Word for Windows and Excel. Essential Skills: 90/50. Age 25 to 35. Please call **Claire Ashley**.

...City... City... City... City... City... City... City... City.**Trading Floor
Senior PA
to £26,000 plus bens**

A fantastic opportunity has arisen for an experienced senior secretary with financial experience to join this busy professional team of traders. Working for two bosses you will be involved in presentations, client contact, organising functions and special events and juggling life in general! Essential requirements are an 'A' level education and skills of 80/50/windows. Hours: 8.00-6.00. Age 24-34. Please call **Claire Ashley**.

**Sales
Assistant
c£20,000**

Dynamic and successful team of Equity Traders require a confident and highly organised assistant. You will be close to the action and will be involved with back up trading, organising roadshows and client lunches as well as co-ordinating the whole team. Essential requirements are a numerate brain and a flexible approach, with skills of 50wpm/Word for Windows/Excel/Powerpoint. Age 22-30. Please call **Katy Burke**.

**Events Organiser
1 Year Contract
to £23,000**

Experienced events organiser required for this high profile City company. Fully autonomous role in which you will act as project manager and provide your own secretarial/administrative support. You should be a self-starter with the motivation and drive to see things through from start to finish. Skills: 50wpm typing/wordprocessing. Previous experience in this field is essential. Please call **Vivienne Mitchell**.

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Exceptional role, ideal of international, marketing, sales, product development, with emphasis on the Americas. C. £20,000. Age 25+

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Candidate must have solid advertising experience, use of computer and a calm, efficient personality.

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Major players in International executive search are looking for a graduate secretary, ideally with fluency in French or German. Your responsibilities will be for an innovative, happy, professional company that nurtures and values employees. Duties include occasional voluntary type: Data entry, general administration and a chance to obtain a permanent position. Essential. Age: 22-32.

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For more details, please call Claire Hawkes:

0 1 7 1 2 2 5 1 8 8 8

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with French
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Global Japanese Technological Corporation requires a bilingual assistant to work with their top men in Europe and 2 IT Development specialists. The role will involve drafting and translating documents using both English and French, co-ordinating worldwide libraries, researching and designing progress reports together with general secretarial support. This would suit someone of graduate calibre, with a flair for software, whose first language is English. You should have great attention to detail and be confident working autonomously using Word, Powerpoint and ideally Excel and Access often to tight deadlines.

For more information please call Hobstones in the City on 0171 550 7000.

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PERSONNEL**

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Could you thrive in the demanding atmosphere of the trading floor in a global US Investment Bank? Use your minimum of 2 years' banking experience to apply for this exciting role. You will be fully involved in the day-to-day running of the business, including a fast-paced and challenging environment. You will be provided with the necessary training and support to develop your skills and expertise in a very dynamic, highly charged environment. Your excellent communication skills will enable you to quickly establish the necessary rapport with the team and clients and your adherence to strict rules will ensure success in this competitive office. Shortlisted, fast typing skills and familiarity with Microsoft Word and a comparative level are essential.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.

All applicants are equally welcome.

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The young and dynamic MD of this high profile consumer organisation is looking for an exceptional individual to provide full PA and Office Managerial support. Flexible and motivated, you will be able to turn your hand to general personnel administration, the supervision of staff and a broad range of operational duties as well as handling executive office control. A sense of humour is a pre-requisite. In this team-oriented culture where you play as hard as you work, previous experience of events planning, advanced Microsoft, fast typing and shorthand are all essential.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.

All applicants are equally welcome.

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Angela Mortimer

CONSULTANT'S PA**£23,000**

An opportunity has arisen to join a prestigious, internationally renowned management consultancy based in the West End. Working as the PA to a senior, particularly successful consultant, you will be relied upon to produce reports, organise a frantic diary and manage numerous projects at once. You will liaise extensively with a variety of clients on a day to day basis and understand the value of a good service ethic. The ideal candidate will have at least three years' secretarial experience gained in a management environment, 60 wpm typing and will have knowledge shorthand. In addition you will take pride in being a professional, career PA and feel comfortable in a busy office role. Please call

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.

All applicants are equally welcome.

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer

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Easy journey into Victoria! This job could be for you! This lively team who are part of one of the world's biggest organisations are looking for a 'mature thinking' individual with good knowledge of Microsoft Office. There is little set work so you must have a flair for managing day-to-day admin, people and a busy boss. If you'd like to be appreciated for your talents and you're 25 yrs+ then call us for more info about this special role.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP

Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 5260

**MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS****Administrator/Secretary in SW1****£20,000 + STL + med + lunch**

Easy journey into Victoria! This job could be for you! This lively team who are part of one of the world's biggest organisations are looking for a 'mature thinking' individual with good knowledge of Microsoft Office. There is little set work so you must have a flair for managing day-to-day admin, people and a busy boss. If you'd like to be appreciated for your talents and you're 25 yrs+ then call us for more info about this special role.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP

Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 5260

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**OFFICE MANAGER
£24,000**

A lynch pin position in this successful consultancy. Using your organisational flair you will orchestrate the office move, take responsibility for regular social events and oversee the smooth running of this dynamic west end office. For further information please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
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Elizabeth Hunt
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ATHLETICS

Radford puts case for his defence

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

PETER RADFORD says that, from where he sits, he does not see the bleakness. Others would say he should try a different seat.

Radford, the executive chairman of the British Athletic Federation (BAF), has had another week under fire. A newspaper listed his dossier of disasters and a BAF council member said on radio that "the sport is failing to pieces." This after Tony Ward, the federation spokesman, who had been "dumped" as he put it, left warning that British athletics was "on the way to tearing itself apart".

The BAF management board has given Radford a confidence vote, but a move is afoot among clubs to pass a note of no confidence in him at the annual meeting in March and have him ousted. Their concern is that Radford seems to be doing little for the lower tiers of the sport. Financial losses and rumours of redundancies among federation staff have contributed towards the bleak picture.

Yesterday, though, Radford was feeling positive. "I see major new funding through the lottery, a new television contract, which will make athletics look different and take it to a new audience, and, instead of athletics being at war with its competitors, it has joined in a partnership," he said. "It does not lead me to believe this is a sport that is about to fold."

Radford did not talk of

redundancies, but of "very significant changes in the staffing over the next 12 months". The events department did not deliver first-rate meetings last year, he said, because they were under-resourced. "We try to do two things with one lot of money. We try to put on good televised events and we try to run the sport from top to bottom, fund regional offices, put money into leagues and the coaching programme. This is not the model for the rest of Europe." An application for a £4-million-a-year National Lottery grant would, if successful, enable both to flourish.

Radford admitted to "concerns about the sport at grassroots level, our ability to find resources to do this critically important job", but he hopes that the move from ITV, which did not wish to continue televising the sport, to Channel 4 will attract sponsors.

"The idea that we are being shunted into some backwater [with Channel 4] and that we are going to get lower viewing figures, I do not think will be borne out." Live British athletics will be moved to Sunday evenings "prime time".

The fisk directed at the BAF for failing to accommodate Michael Johnson in the grand prix last year might have been minimised if Radford had said at the time, rather than yesterday, that the athlete's agent was insisting that a joblot of his athletes be accepted. Another dash of grey was applied when it was reported that the federation faces a £300,000 loss from the Performance Games because the sponsoring company went into administration before paying up. Radford admits an error in straying from the usual policy of money upfront.

So when should Radford be judged? "I do not think there is a major point in time, it is ongoing," he said. Judged today, the jury would be against him. Tomorrow, who knows?



Stewart pulls a short ball to the boundary to reach an impressive half-century yesterday

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL	
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA) DIVISION ONE: Boston Celtics v New Jersey Nets. Boston 102, Orlando 114. New Jersey 111, Utah 97.	
NBA: Chicago Bulls 105, Phoenix 105. Dallas 102, Denver 100 (OT).	
CRICKET	
World Series Pakistan v West Indies	
SYDNEY (Pakistan won toss). Pakistan bowled. West Indies by eight wickets.	
WEST INDIES	
S L Campbell c Inzamam b Wasim 3 S Chander 1 b Inzamam 2 b Mushtaq Ahmed 72 A F Goffen c Asrar b Saeed 47 R I C Holder c Asrar b Saeed 11 J D Murray c Asrar b Saeed 11 R G Sunil 1 b Wasim 1 C L Hooper c Asrar b Wasim 1 N A M Mithun not out 2 P I C Thompson b Wasim 2 Extras (b 6, w 4, st 18) Total (47.0 overs) 181	
FALL OF WICKETS 1-10, 2-50, 3-155, 4-159, 5-160, 6-165, 7-168, 8-176, 9-178	
FOOTBALL	
FA CUP: Third round: Hednesford Town 1 Forest Green Rovers 0	
NATION'S CHAMPIONSHIP: Second round: Bury 6 Mansfield Town 0	
TENNIS: SCOTTISH CUP: Second round: Dundee 2 Liverpool 1; Cowdenbeath 1 Dunbar 0; Forfar Athletes 0 Alloa Athlete 1; Ross County 3 Montrose 0; Stenhousemuir 1 Hamilton Academical 0; Stirling 1 Inverness Caledonian Thistle 1; Second-round replay: Arbroath 3 Stirlingshire 0.	
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NPL): Boston 3 Cleves 2; Montreal 1 Dallas 2; NY Rangers 2; New Haven 4; Washington 0 Toronto 3; Chester 0 Tampa 2; San Jose 8 Phoenix 0.	
UNIBON LEAGUE: Presidents' Cup: First round: Enfield 3 Redditch Borough 0; Bishop's Stortford 2 Parrock 0; Headstone 2; Buntingford 1.	
FIVE-A-SIDE: FA FIVE-A-SIDE: First division: Portsmouth 2; Rotherham 0; Preston St John 3 End 3; Sunderland 1; League Cup: Group three: Trimmer Rovers 5 Wrexham 3.	
YOUTH CUP: Third round: Bolton Wanderers 1 Everton 2.	
SCHOOLS MATCHES: Premier League Trophy: Under-12s: Warringtonshire 0 West Bromwich 1; Under-16s: Greater Manchester 0 Liverpool 1.	
SPANISH LEAGUE: Barcelona 2 Huesca 3.	
HOCKEY	
WOMEN'S CLUB MATCH: Colwyn Bay 1 Neston 4.	
FOR THE RECORD	
AUTOWINDSCREENS SHIELD: Northern section: Second round: Bury 6 Mansfield Town 0	
TENNIS: ENGLAND CUP: Second round: Bury 2 Liverpool 1; Cowdenbeath 1 Dunbar 0; Forfar Athletes 0 Alloa Athlete 1; Ross County 3 Montrose 0; Stenhousemuir 1 Hamilton Academical 0; Stirling 1 Inverness Caledonian Thistle 1; Second-round replay: Arbroath 3 Stirlingshire 0.	
ICE HOCKEY	
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 3 Cleves 2; Montreal 1 Dallas 2; NY Rangers 2; New Haven 4; Washington 0 Toronto 3; Chester 0 Tampa 2; San Jose 8 Phoenix 0.	
MOTOR RALLYING	
DAKAR RALLY: Tenth stage (Dakar to Kidal, 537km): Camel 1, D Guedes (Por); Nasr 2, Hirman 4; Toyota 3, N Guedes (Por); Suzuki 4, J P Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 5, J P Guedes (Por); Fiat 6, M Guedes (Por); Ford 7, Mitsubishi 8, M Guedes (Por); Peugeot 9, D Guedes (Por); Volvo 10, M Guedes (Por); Renault 11, D Guedes (Por); Mini 12, M Guedes (Por); Ford 13, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 14, M Guedes (Por); Peugeot 15, M Guedes (Por); Suzuki 16, M Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 17, M Guedes (Por); Fiat 18, M Guedes (Por); Ford 19, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 20, M Guedes (Por); Suzuki 21, M Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 22, M Guedes (Por); Fiat 23, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 24, M Guedes (Por); Suzuki 25, M Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 26, M Guedes (Por); Fiat 27, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 28, M Guedes (Por); Suzuki 29, M Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 30, M Guedes (Por); Fiat 31, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 32, M Guedes (Por); Suzuki 33, M Guedes (Por); Mitsubishi 34, M Guedes (Por); Fiat 35, M Guedes (Por); Toyota 36, M Guedes (Por); 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RACING: SEARCH WIDENS FOR SUITABLE GROUND CONDITIONS AS CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL BECKONS

Trainers find planning hard going

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE worst of the freeze seems to be over but, as the first National Hunt meetings of 1997 were staged in England yesterday, trainers were confronting a new problem with the Cheltenham Festival only 55 days away.

Although the frost is coming out of the ground, the abnormally dry winter means the going is too firm at many racecourses to risk high-class horses who are already short of race practice. With officials predicting good to firm ground at Kempton and

Huntingdon and Windsor, today's jumps cards could not have raced yesterday and up to SC of frost was forecast overnight at both venues.

Haydock, where the main meetings are due to be staged on Saturday, the top trainers are desperately searching elsewhere for suitable courses to send runners.

Henrietta Knight is planning her first expedition this Friday to Keise from her base in Oxfordshire. "I don't think she knows where it is," Terry Biddlecombe, husband of the Wantage trainer, said yesterday.

David Nicholson, who is also sending his first runners to the Scottish course, may send up to five horses to Leopardstown on Sunday, including the unruled Triumph Hurdle hope, Namoodaj.

The extent of the problem is underlined by comparing the number of runners the leading 20 trainers have sent out this season — 2,626 — to the same time 12 months ago — 3,026. The 13 per cent difference now



Garnwin takes command from Nordin Valley at Leicester yesterday. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

looks set to be exacerbated by prevailing conditions.

Oliver Sherwood, based at Lamourn, admitted yesterday: "It is a nightmare. There is quick ground almost everywhere and a lot of horses won't run. Unless it changes, you won't see Large Action at Cheltenham next Saturday.

Paul Nicholls said: "We have kept the horses going

By now most novices have normally had two or three runs before having a break for Cheltenham. This year, we have been lucky if we have got one run into some horses. It is the worst winter since I started training 14 years ago."

He added: "I am sure we will get a nice drop of rain

during the freeze, so it is very frustrating the ground is good to firm everywhere. I have got five I want to run at Haydock on Saturday, including See More Business, but if the ground stays the way it is they won't run."

He added: "I am sure we will get a nice drop of rain

before Cheltenham but if we don't it will be a disaster."

The West Country handler, fifth in the trainers' table, highlighted the case of two horses who have been particularly badly hit by the frost and dry winter. Cherryrun won on his seasonal reappearance in the first week of November

but has not been able to run since because of the ground. Meanwhile, Storm Damage, his Tone Gold Trophy horse, is still awaiting his first run in this country and if the ground does not change soon "we will be running out of time".

Nicholson has run only half his 90-strong string because of the weather and is becoming increasingly exasperated. "I have only got half my hair left as the rest has been pulled out in frustration. I am going mad to the degree I look like taking four or five to Ireland on Sunday."

The raiding party is likely to consist of Mulligan — who

Richard Evans

Nap: More Dash Thancash (3.00 Windsor)
Next best: Quality (1.30 Windsor)

will take on Danoli — Zabadi. Call It A Day, Kaid and Namoodaj, who has been well backed for the Triumph Hurdle despite not jumping a hurdle in public.

Biddlecombe said: "Before we had this frost, we needed snow to soak into the ground. Instead, the ground was dry, the frost has come out quicker and with the sun and wind, it is going to be firm at most tracks — and you can't water at this time of year. In some places, the frost has given the grass a fair old hammering".

He added: "The horses have not stopped and they are pretty good; the problem is the ground. You expect this at the beginning of the season, but not this time of year and you don't want to jar up horses now — with Cheltenham just around the corner."

Irish take lead on strategy despite teething problems

By OUR IRISH RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE Irish Horseracing Authority (IHA), Irish racing's governing body, last week published its strategic plan for the next five years. In most other industries such a move would hardly rate a mention, but racing is the unfortunate exception.

The infighting among the many sectional interests of British racing only emphasises the bitter struggles to which the industry is prone. So the publication of the Irish plan, albeit a year late, represents a substantial achievement.

Since then Dennis Brosnan, the IHA chairman, has emphasised the need for the 16-member board, which represents all branches of the thoroughbred industry, to continue to present a united front. But even before the plan was dry on the paper, the first confrontation took place.

The immediate result of that was the bookmakers' strike at Leopardstown last Saturday. The IHA's objective of establishing starting price betting shops at all of Ireland's leading racecourses has led to a bitter dispute with the Irish National Bookmakers' Association, whose chairman sits on the Authority.

It promises to be only the first skirmish in the progression of a plan which has the potential to change the face of Irish racing, on- and off-course.

In the long term, it is the latter that is the more intriguing. A total overhaul of the antiquated Tote

system includes setting up a high street business with a target turnover of £7 million by the year 2001.

The aim is to have these retail facilities situated in betting shops. Entwined with this is an Irish satellite racing channel providing live pictures by next year.

In the short term, however, the Authority is heavily dependent on increased government financial support. At present, that support amounts to £8.6 million per year, but the Authority wants to reach £12.6 million by 2001.

The Irish government is already involved in a capital development plan for the modernisation of racecourses. The potential for confrontation though is inherent in the Authority's policy of grading courses for further funding according to their potential for increased betting, attendances and sponsorship.

Brosnan has emphasised the importance of improved facilities at the Republic's 25 racecourses and, although the IHA stated that closures are "not an option", the new plan allows it to take action if courses are not making efforts to upgrade within 12 months.

Changes, however, are possible only with co-operation and, as the bookmakers' strike shows, the threat of discord is immense.

The framework for the future of racing in Ireland is in place. The fascination is whether it can be built upon.

WOLVERHAMPTON

1.40 Woodbury Lad 3.10 Golden Haider 3.40 Fugla 4.10 KOMASTA (map)

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.10 GREENSPAN

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 2.10 GALAPINO (map); 3.10 Golden Haider.

GOING: STANDARD

DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

1.40 METHERTON MAIDEN STAKES (33,328; 1m 100yds) (6 runners)

1 (2) GOLD LANCE 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — D McNeice 80
2 (8) COLD LITTLE 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J P Tolley 80
3 (2) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — K Sivell 80
4 (9) GOLDIE 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — R Parsons 80
5 (3) GOLDSTEIN 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80
6 (4) GOLDY DIAMOND 14/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80
7 (1) GO EVENING IN PARIS 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80
8 (5) GOLDSPUR TAUTED 11/7 19/2 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

9 (6) GOLDSPUR TAUTED 11/7 19/2 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

10 (7) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

11 (8) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

12 (9) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

13 (10) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

14 (11) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

15 (12) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

16 (13) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

17 (14) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

18 (15) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

19 (16) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

20 (17) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

21 (18) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

22 (19) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

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24 (21) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

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29 (26) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

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44 (41) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

45 (42) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

46 (43) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

47 (44) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

48 (45) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

49 (46) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

50 (47) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

51 (48) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

52 (49) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

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57 (54) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

58 (55) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

59 (56) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

60 (57) GOLD SPUR 10/1 1st to 100yds 8 Metherton 8-10-0 — J Murphy 80

FOOTBALL

Points deduction adds to pressure on Middlesbrough

By DAVID MADDOCK

THE stony glare offered by Bryan Robson as he left Lancaster Gate told the story: it had not been a good day for Middlesbrough. In the morning, Fabrizio Ravanelli, their most expensive player, claimed that the team was doomed to relegation. In the afternoon, that possibility was increased when Middlesbrough had three points deducted by the FA Premier League.

Robson, the manager, and Keith Lamb, the chief executive, were in London to answer charges relating to the scheduled game against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on December 21, which Middlesbrough failed to fulfil.

Robson had claimed that no fewer than 23 of his players were ill or unavailable, and independently cancelled the match, suggesting that it would be unfair to supporters to field an under-strength team. An inquiry was launched and the result yesterday was that Middlesbrough were fined £50,000 by a disciplinary commission and ordered to pay the costs of the hearing, as well as losing three points. Having started the day bottom of the FA Carling Premiership, they now find themselves four points adrift of Southampton.

It was a surprising decision, not least because of the precedents. In 1994, the Football Association, having imposed a six-point deduction on Tottenham Hotspur for financial irregularities committed

under a previous regime, was forced to withdraw its punishment after the club pursued the matter in the courts.

The Premier League decided, however, that there was good reason, in this case, to take such action. "We concluded that Middlesbrough did not have just cause to unilaterally cancel the match," Mike Lee, a Premier League spokesman, said.

"Middlesbrough have the right of appeal, and the question of compensation to Blackburn will be addressed in due course by the board of the FA Premier League."

Robson refused to comment immediately after the hearing. Lamb said that Middlesbrough would be offering their response after taking legal advice. There were indications, though, that the club would appeal against the deduction of points. It has 14 days to do so. Blackburn

PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	12	10	1	1	30	13	33
Man Utd	11	8	3	0	28	11	27
Arsenal	11	7	4	0	30	11	26
Newcastle	11	5	6	0	24	10	23
Leeds	11	5	6	0	24	10	23
Watford	11	5	6	0	24	10	23
Aston Villa	11	5	6	0	24	10	23
Chelsea	10	6	4	0	23	9	22
Sheff Wed	7	10	4	0	23	5	14
Brentford	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Tottenham	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Sunderland	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Leeds	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Derby	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Blackburn	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Coventry	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Leicester	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
West Ham	7	6	5	0	23	5	14
Nottingham Forest	4	8	10	0	28	13	15
Southampton	2	4	8	0	28	13	15
Middlesbrough	2	4	8	0	28	13	15

* denotes three points deducted

Brighton fans take tough line with FA

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

DISGRUNTLED Brighton and Hove Albion supporters are calling on fans throughout the country to join their latest protest about the impasse at the club. The Brighton Independent Supporters' Association is asking supporters to jam the Football Association's telephone and fax lines in the three days leading up to the England game against Italy on February 12.

John Baine, founder member of the association, said: "The idea behind this protest is to clog the FA ahead of the England game. We have to make people aware that the FA have been spineless in matters concerning the Albion's future, and we want to bring it home fundamentally to them."

"We would like to think that there will be between 4,000 to 5,000 faxes and phone calls. We've already had support from all over the country and our aim is to make it impossible for the FA to function before the England match."

Baine believes breaking the

deadlock in trying to find a way forward for Brighton is the responsibility of the FA. "We're having to fight against them to save our club," he said.

More talks between Bill Archer, the Brighton chairman, and Dick Knight, head of the consortium trying to take over the Nationwide League third division club, are taking place this week.

Shane Nicholson, the West Bromwich Albion defender, sees certain to miss the rest of the season. Nicholson has been out of action since November when his leg developed an infection.

Alan Buckley, the Albion manager, said: "It looks as if Shane could be out for the rest of the season. I hope I am wrong, but he lost a lot of weight when he was laid up and there was also a lot of muscle wastage."

Sheffield United joined the rush of clubs wishing to float on the Stock Exchange when they completed a reverse takeover deal with Conrad plc, a leisure firm, yesterday.

Russell declines to paint town red

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE decision taken yesterday by Hednesford Town, on police advice, to concede home advantage in their fourth-round tie against Middlesbrough ensures that, once again, the FA Cup will witness another extreme contrast between football's haves and have-nots.

Lining up at kick-off on the FA Carling Premiership side in the Riverside Stadium on Saturday week will be Fabrizio Ravanelli, the striker who cost them £7.5 million and who is reportedly paid £42,000 a week; ten yards away will be Keith Russell, who cost the Vauxhall Conference club £7,000 and earns around £300 a week as a full-time painter and decorator and part-time footballer.

It was Russell's 43rd-minute goal that earned Hednesford a 1-0 victory over York City, of the Nationwide League second division, at Keys Park on Monday night, and yesterday he celebrated by going on a shopping spree with friends in Birmingham.

Russell, 22, had decided to spend his hard-earned cash irrespective of the outcome, but scoring the only goal, from the penalty spot, made his day off all the more sweet.

Unlike Ravanelli, there is no grand lifestyle to reward Russell for his endeavours. He takes his own sandwiches to

work and lives in a modest semi-detached house with his father, Roy, and stepmother-to-be, Pat. His idea of a night out is a few beers in the local pub five doors away, where he went on Monday night. There is one area in which Russell prides himself on being on a par with Ravanelli — the desire to succeed.

In their three previous meetings, ten yellow cards and three red have been handed out, though Paul Stewart's sending-off in the FA Carling Premiership fixture at Highbury in September was later annulled. In the same game Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, was banished from the touchline for becoming overenthusiastic amid all the excitement.

In Saturday's upward surge in the Premiership ground to a halt at Blackburn on Saturday and they could face another fraught 90 minutes against Woking of the

FAMILIARITY has bred little contempt between Arsenal and Sunderland this season, with the fourth instalment — an FA Cup third-round replay at Roker Park tonight — promising similarly rugged fare. It might be heralded as some achievement should the teams finish the tie with 11 players apiece.

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On Saturday, in Sunderland's 1-0 home win in the Premiership, Dennis Bergkamp, the Arsenal striker, was dismissed for an uncharacteristic lunge at Paul Bracewell. Five of his team-mates — Nigel Winterburn, Martin Keown, John Hartson, David Platt and Tony Adams — were also cautioned.

It is unlikely in such a short time — it is the clubs' third encounter in 12 days — that the bad feeling will have subsided. Yet it is the league matches that have experienced most of the disciplinary problems,

Rovers greeted the news with a degree of satisfaction. They were incensed that their supporters were deprived of the game at short notice, and had asked to be awarded the points from the match. The Premier League did not go that far, but Rovers will still, no doubt, be happy that one of their fellow strugglers has lost three points.

"I think it is only fair.

Middlesbrough chose not to consult us about cancelling the game, and it was a major disappointment for our fans," Tony Parkes, the Blackburn caretaker manager, said. "On the Continent, it is normal for teams to be awarded the points and a 2-0 victory, and the other team docked points, and we felt that would be fair."

The commission's verdict completed what must have been the worst day of Robson's managerial career. He travelled to London digesting the news that Ravanelli had once more expressed his dissatisfaction with events at the club.

Although the Italy international striker did not say as much in the interview, given to a newspaper in his homeland, he clearly feels less than happy, and it cannot be long before he departs the North East.

"The situation, I am sorry to say, is truly tragic," Ravanelli was quoted as saying. "We are the tailenders, we hardly have any hopes of salvation, and they give us three days off! I went to the training ground, and it was all locked up."

"I was there with Jan Aage Fjortoft [his team-mate] and we could not get in. We just had to make do as best we could. I can't even get angry any more about the situation. We are right at the bottom without hardly any hope — what can I do?"

Ravanelli has expressed his unrest in the past. He has criticised Middlesbrough's training regime, and is clearly frustrated with the practices in England. He has been linked with Manchester United, and it would be no surprise if he were to depart at the end of the season, just ten months after a £7.5 million transfer from Juventus, the European champions.

Ravanelli had just one piece of good news yesterday. Gianluca Festa, the defender, arrived on Teesside for a medical and will complete a £2.7 million transfer from Internazionale today, providing there are no problems.

Festa, 27, is in line to make his Premiership debut on Saturday, against Sheffield Wednesday at the Riverside Stadium.

He will not be partnered, though, by Mirko Taccia, another Italian defender. The Napoli centre half returned to Italy without completing a two-week trial period, and no transfer is likely.

The rewards taken as

Woking were starting life in the Vauxhall Conference, have come thick and fast: winning Wembley appearances in the FA Trophy finals of 1994 and 1995 and four England semi-professional caps among them.

Now, just 31, Brown will

take his place at the heart of

the Woking defence as they

take on top-flight opponents for the second time in six years. They lost 1-0 at Everton in 1991.

The fears

of that side and the bold way

that Geoff Chapple, the manager, broke it up to bring in Brown and others fitting over a stuttering start to Conference life. After 15 games Brown was dropped.

Brown said: "I went in to

see Geoff and, as

we had been giving

away a lot of

goals down the

middle, said that

I had started my

career at South-

ampton playing

as sweeper, and if

anybody became

injured or he

wanted to try something dif-

ferent, I was ready to have a go. I got my chance sooner than I expected and things went pretty well."

Brown says with pride that, since the club has been in the Conference, "we've played 190 games and I've played 178 or 179 of them." His manager, then, has fully come to recognise Brown's worth.

"He's a model of consistency, a very good footballer," Chapple said. Most of those

matches

asise

from the

six when

Brown

was

left out

— have come

through

suspension.

"He's had a fair amount of bookings, which, when you consider what a nice guy Kevan is, must be down to his will to win and the law about tackling from behind that he suffers from more than most," Chapple said.

Yet the abiding

impression

of Brown is of calm

reading

of the

game and

the neatness and ef-

fectiveness of his

tackling whether

used as a sweeper

or a marker or in

Woking's present

system as a centre back.

Brown's captaincy is under-

stood. "He's got great lead-

ship qualities," Chapple said. "He can be a little on the quiet side, which doesn't mean to say he doesn't do the job beautifully. You don't need a big mouth to be a captain. We've got plenty of those anyway."

Captain in turn pays tribute to

manager: "Geoff's a big

one for flowing, attractive

football and the players he

want pretty well."

RUGBY UNION

Wainwright restored as Scotland captain

By MARK SOISTER

HAVING proved his fitness and been included as one of only three back-row forwards in the original 21-man squad announced last week, it was a matter of course yesterday that Rob Wainwright would be restored to the Scotland side both as a player and captain.

He was present at the press conference at which the team to play Wales on Saturday was announced. It shows four changes, three among the forwards, from that which beat Italy in December. Damian Cronin and Eric Peters have been dropped and Ian Smith is injured. Gary Armstrong will play at scrum half in place of Bryan Redpath.

At the age of 31, having recovered from surgery on longstanding groin and Achilles' heel injuries, Wainwright will win his 25th cap and lead Scotland for the eighth time.

TEAM

SCOTLAND: R J S Shepherd (Macclesfield); A D Stannard (Plymouth), S Jennings (Macclesfield); G P T Tovey (Newcastle); K M Logan (Shropshire); C M Chalmers (Moseley); G Armstrong (Newcastle); D I W County (Bath); R J Warriner (Shropshire); C County (Shropshire); M McIlroy (Bath); G Wilson (Newcastle); G W Weir (Newcastle); A I Reed (Wasps); M J Wallace (Glasgow Warriors); D J Williams (London Wasps); S Stark (Macclesfield); B & S Erkinson (London Scottish); B W Redpath (Macclesfield); D S Munro (Glasgow High Knights); T J Smith (Wasps); D G Ellis (Carmarthen).

from No 8. "I am very proud to be back," Wainwright said. "Playing for your country is special, but leading the team is something again. Having tasted that experience, you want more."

Wainwright, a doctor, who is hoping to avoid being posted to Bosnia with his Army unit later this year, said: "It might have been difficult coming back under a different captain but, Gregor [Townsend] and I have a good working relationship."

Provided he performs to his own high standards in the five nations' championship, Wainwright, who ideally would have played more than four comeback games, must be a candidate to lead the British Isles to South Africa in the summer.

Wainwright said the Army were "quite keen to send me to Bosnia. I am not sure how long it would be for. They are very accommodating about my rugby, and they would realise it would not be in their best interests to send me to Bosnia for a year. It certainly



A last-ditch effort by Mullins, the Australia full back, fails to stop Davies from scoring in the corner. Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsport

Ringmaster Davies is top of the bill

Christopher Irvine, in the last of our series, reflects on how a genius at both codes of rugby would not be denied at Wembley

In both codes of rugby football, great tries are invariably associated with special individuals, and no player has blazed a trail of glory in the two arenas quite like Jonathan Davies.

Arrogance is sometimes misinterpreted in sport. The self-belief that Davies has is not boastful. It simply tells him that he can beat his man and pull off the outrageous. One moment at Wembley, on October 22, 1994, is burnt into the memory as sublime arrogance.

In 12 previous appearances for the Great Britain rugby league team, Davies had not faced the might of Australia.

Scotland have scored six tries in their past two internationals, all by wings, and Johnston believes that the hard work which has been put in is gradually starting to bear fruit as Scotland look to play a more dynamic approach.

Robert Howley, the Cardiff scrum half, failed to complete yesterday's Wales training session because of a hamstring injury, although Kevin Bowning, the national coach, expressed optimism that he would have recovered by the weekend.

Scott Gibbs, who captained Wales against the United States last Saturday, is still troubled by the knee injury he picked up in that game but is expected to be fit to train today.

Speed off the mark and an antenna for the nearest gap were two of the traits that prompted Widnes to sign Davies from his rugby union club, Llanelli, in 1989. A year before that black day for Welsh rugby union, Davies, a small man from Trimsaran, roused a nation with probably his finest try for Wales in a 25-20 defeat of Scotland. It was instinctive, daring and, yes, arrogant. He took a

ballooned reverse pass from Robert Jones from a scrum inside the Scotland 22, cut inside and chased his immediate grubber-kick.

Given the greater space and attacking opportunities inherent in rugby league, Davies, in that code, was like a child in a sweetshop. Any number of tries stuck out as examples of Davies the showman. Quick hands and quicker feet outwitted bigger, more experienced opponents.

He became rugby league's Barnet, and, at club level, his act was at its most brilliant one perishing January afternoon at Halifax. Seemingly non-existent gaps opened up for two solo tries for Warrington in the Challenge Cup.

Before he faced Australia, whom he rates as the best team in either code, Davies had not enjoyed the best of times on his only other visit to Wembley, a losing appearance for Widnes in the 1993 Challenge Cup final; 1994, and the arrival of Australia, was different. The sudden resignation of Malcolm Reilly, the coach, gave Ellery Hanley seven weeks to sort out a Great Britain side.

pessimism, Alex Murphy declared that Great Britain had no chance. Davies, as usual, was a bag of nerves. His deadline for the toilet before games is now legend.

It was fear that drove the Britain side that rainy Saturday afternoon, fear of losing

THE GREATEST TRY I EVER SAW

There were injuries galore and players were selected out of position, including Davies, a centre at Warrington, at full back.

Australia had swept all before them on the road to Wembley. With predictable

Quick hands and quicker feet outwitted bigger opponents'

and fear of not letting one another down, once Shaun Edwards, the captain, had been sent off for a moment of uncharacteristic madness.

How Britain turned potential disaster to their advantage is now part of league folklore, as much as the defeats of Australia in 1914 in Sydney and in Brisbane in 1958, when Britain both times finished with only ten players. A man down in the modern era can place impossible constraints,

and Edwards's dreadful high tackle, in the 28th minute, looked to have knocked Britain out as effectively as it had Brady Clyde.

Twelve minutes later Wembley erupted. The old place had, six months before, witnessed a spectacular score by Martin Offiah for Wigan that many felt could not be bettered. Davies trumped it with

match-winning try out of the blue.

Bobbie Goulding began the raid in breaking left from a scrum on the Britain 20-metre-line. Laurie Daley, the Australian stand-off half, was wrong-footed and the opposition cover drawn.

Davies saw the potential and tracked right. By now Alan Hunte was making ground down the left. Offiah advanced the move another 25 metres. He looked to have taken a wrong option by stepping inside and being stopped. In hindsight, it was right. Brett Mullins, the Australian full back, had been drawn crossfield by the danger and, as the ball whipped right via Hunte, Goulding, Phil Clarke and Denis Betts, who created room for Davies 40 metres out, he was struggling to get back.

Half a dummy left Steve Renouf in two minds and Davies was through the gap between him and Brad Fitter. He was now in the clear, with Gary Connolly and Jason Robinson in support. There was no way that Davies was going to deny himself, nor was Mullins going to prevent him. Mullins made a despairing grab for his ankles but Davies launched himself and scored full-stretch at the right corner.

The shuddering tackles

made by Davies in an 8-4 victory were equally memorable, but a partially dislocated shoulder forced him to miss the last quarter. Shorn of his inspiration, Great Britain lost the series 2-1. When Davies was appointed MBE, in January 1995, that try was highlighted as his finest.

BASKETBALL

Byrd to divide time between two sports

By NICHOLAS HARLING

ALTON BYRD will not sever his ties with Crystal Palace despite resigning as coach to become general manager of the London Monarchs American football team.

"I've only stepped back from coaching," Byrd, 39, said yesterday. "I haven't resigned as a director or shareholder."

"Through all the last three years," Dennis said, "I have not allowed myself negative thoughts. If being a boss means being a leader, you do not have the luxury of self-pity. I call the couple of seconds between when I wake up and when my feet hit the floor as I get out of bed my 'sorrow period'. That is all I allow myself."

"I am not going to make any predictions about the new car because we just don't know how it is going to perform yet. It looks nice, but for me, I would not care if it was a flying brick as long as it crossed the line first."

America on Radio 5 Live that Byrd established strong links with American football.

Palace will not, on his recommendation, be seeking a new coach but will rely on Kevin Hibbs, their assistant coach. "We're going to stick with what we've got," Byrd said. "What would be the point of making a short-term appointment which may prove to be totally wrong."

With the 5ft 8in San Francisco-born Byrd, a dexterous dribbler, Palace were one of the original powers in the domestic game until he left for a five-year stay with Livingston. Countless honours and four clubs later, Byrd, now a naturalised Englishman, returned as player-coach to Palace, who had long since resigned themselves to life outside the Budweiser League.

"My mind was already made up," he said. "The Monarchs had already asked me twice. The more I thought about it, the more I thought it would be beneficial to me." It was as presenter of Sports

MOTOR RACING: McLAREN BOSS LEARNS FROM MISTAKES IN PLANNING REVIVAL OF FORTUNES IN FORMULA ONE

Dennis burns links with Marlboro's past glories

By OLIVER HORN

Formula One, an attempt to turn a fallen former favourite into a non-company, to wipe it from the records.

It was down to Ron Dennis, the McLaren managing director, some people said, another example of his cussedness. Others said it showed a lack of grace, that it should not matter that the association with Marlboro ended at the close of last season and that Dennis is now trying to please a new cigarette sponsor, the German company, West.

Dennis has had his share of brickbats in the past. Some, perhaps, have been deserved. But this, perhaps, is different. It is hard to criticise a man for wanting to block out the leading symbol of a bright and successful past because he is so intent on forging a brighter future.

Dennis, in fact, was a fascinating study yesterday, a man at the crossroads between failure and success, as he and his drivers, David Coulthard and Mika Hakkinen, talked about the struggle to get back to the top step of the rostrum. This was the other side of Dennis, the one he rarely



reposes to public view, deeply thoughtful, intelligent, full of insights into his own modus operandi.

He was even willing to talk about where it all gone wrong since the season when his team won 15 out of 16 races, when its domination made

them winning everything, where we got too confident," Dennis said. "It was almost as if we were daring ourselves to take a wheel off the wagon and see if we could still win, set if we could win with five gears while all the other cars had six. Confidence is a weakness. I think it is a destructive force. We will never let that happen again."

"It did not help back then that I was firmly under the impression that Honda would stay with us in 1993. I was under that impression because I was told they were going to stay by someone who should have known. That was an error of judgment on my part, but it was one factor in a complex situation."

"In 1993, I could not really afford Ayrton Senna, but I afforded him to the detriment of the car. Then a lot of the highly technical aspects of racing that we excelled in were banned. It was back to basics and we had left basics behind years ago."

"Slowly, though, McLaren have begun to climb their way back towards the top. They did not win a race last year, but

"We got to a stage when we

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Real beauty of Beckham's goal in life

The football season so far has been filled with puzzlement and confusion: a championship that no one wants to win, a sky full of stars half-hidden by clouds of incompetence and culture-clash. Only now, it seems, are some of its themes becoming clear.

And one of these is not a star from the far-flung galaxies of Serie A, but a more homely English thing. The theme revolves around his capacity for the creation of beauty. This is David Beckham, who, on Sunday, scored his tenth goal of the season.

Observe that carefully-purposed ambiguity. Every one of his ten goals is a contender for the goal of the season. Last Sunday's winning goal at Tottenham Hotspur was just another. Many a player, granted that moment of time and space, might have taken on the shot. But what impelled what must caused him to smile with the outside of his right boot?

Observe that carefully-purposed slice. Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, the Pakistani fast bowlers, by combining swerve with extreme pace, make the ball swing very late.

'There is something stirring in these moments'

The winner would be his first against Wimbledon: the one that followed the trajectory of a ping-pong's forehand loop, from centre circle to goal in a gloriously walloped arcing topspin lob. Beautiful indeed.

This intrusion of aesthetics into a hard and brutal game is ridiculous, futile, utterly beside the point. But beauty is also the heartbeat of the game. There is something profoundly stirring in these Beckham-esque moments. Oh! What a beautiful goal!

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

The cry is plucked from deep, and often, in adversity, reluctantly. But is it irresistible: witness Maradona's second goal against England in 1986. Beckham-esque moments always get people overexcited and talking about football as an art form. Is Beckham, then, an artist? Is there something in him that yearns for the perfect, the beautiful, even as he strives for mere victory? Perhaps other qualities — Linkeiresque opportunism, Shearer-like aggression — are more lasting.

And of course, when it comes to

What does he actually have in mind, when he shapes his shot with that right boot? Certainly it is not something he, no less than any artist, would ever wish to analyse. T. S. Eliot, seen as a terribly conscious and cerebral poet, always said when asked what a poem meant, that he did not have the least idea. I just let fly, Brian, and the image was in the back of the net.

It happens, every now and then, that a footballer will create a series of goals of perfect beauty. Matthew Le Tissier did so two seasons ago; Glenn Hoddle had a season *mirabilis* ten years back. He remained a wonderful player, but as a pure goalscorer, he lost that perfect Beckham-esque combination of beauty and inevitability.

Perhaps Beckham will lose it too, though he is likely to remain a fine player, for there is an awful lot more to his game than beautiful moments. But perhaps a player can only ride the wave of beauty so far. Perhaps other qualities —

Linkeiresque opportunism, Shearer-like aggression — are more lasting.

goals, they all count, there are no marks for artistic impression and football is about winning, not about aesthetics. To get seduced by beauty is one of the most dangerous traps in football: you ask Kevin Keegan or, for that matter, Bryan Robson.

England teams, England players, have traditionally tended to seek the beautiful, rather than the purposeful, ever conscious of the need to look like an England player, to play like an England team. As the former manager, Don Revie, said: "As soon as it dawned on me that we were short of players who combined skill and commitment, I should have forgotten all about trying to play more controlled, attractive football and settled for a real bastard of a team."

The fact is that football is not art: it is a game, and the players seek not communication but victory. Nor is it a tree or a flock of birds art, but they may well be beautiful. No, the fact is that football is a hard struggle that is sometimes — and quite incidentally — beautiful. To say that football is not about beauty does not invalidate this statement; it means merely that you lack these qualities in yourself.

'He seemed to possess an almost painterly talent'

TENNIS: CAPRIATI'S RETURN TO THE GRAND-SLAM STAGE ENDS IN TEARS AND FIRST-ROUND DEFEAT

Hingis on verge of fulfilling promise

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN MELBOURNE

THERE is no common experience in the ageing process. A 50-year-old conductor is a mere slip of a lad. A 20-year-old tennis player can feel hopelessly middle-aged and Jennifer Capriati, who left Melbourne Park in a flood of tears yesterday after losing a first-round match in the Australian Open to her fellow American, Jolene Watanabe, might be wondering where her youth went.

It went west, is the answer, and to be reminded of it is clearly more than she can bear. Under the gentle — some would say indulgent — probing at the press briefing after her match, she filled up and left the stage. To be sure, it was a disappointing result, but it was still a mardy performance.

"I've had my fun, all that is done, why should I ask for more? There's a younger generation knock-knock-knocking at the door," In few areas of human activity are Mr Coward's words more apt than in tennis, particularly on the disfavour side. As Capriati re-

verts to the margins of the game, Martina Hingis, four years her junior, maintains her apparently unstoppable dash towards stardom.

Czech-born, Swiss by adoption, she cuts a pulchritudinous figure and Switzerland certainly has need of a sports personality. If one were cruel, one could say it needs any kind of personality. It may have the most discreet bankers in the world, and the best waiters, but as Harry Lime said when he stepped off the Ferris wheel in *The Third Man*, 500 years of peace and democracy have produced only the cuckoo clock.

Hingis reached the second round easily, after a 6-1, 7-5 rout of Barbara Rinner, from Germany. She was warned for throwing her racket into the net in a fit of pique, after hitting a volley long, and she can pout with the best of them, but it is hard not to take her.

There were some splendid backhand winners in the second set as she came from 4-1 down to win with something to spare.



Capriati, who fled her post-match press conference in tears, shows the strain during her defeat by Watanabe

Seeded fourth, which accords with her world ranking, Hingis comes to Melbourne fresh from her triumph in the Sydney International tournament last week, where she beat Capriati in the final. She is the coming young thing, just as Capriati once was. Like the American, she was weaned on the game as a lass — even named after Navratilova — and must now come to terms with the physical and emotional demands of burgeoning fame.

Capriati reached the semi-finals of the French Open at 14, and followed up a year later with similar placings at Wimbledon and at Flushing Meadow in the US Open. Her subsequent travails off the court have been well recorded, and on it she has not gone beyond the first round of a grand-slam tournament since 1993.

Hingis, a semi-finalist in New York last year, is endowed with a similar depth of talent and, more significantly, seems to have the temperament to back it up. Although — and it is an important caveat — nobody will know for sure until she proves it.

Whose head would be turned by earnings of

\$1 million before the age of 16? A hermit, possibly. Little Miss Hingis is no hermit. Accompanied by her mother, who goes by the name of Melanie Zogg and acts as coach, lean-to and general factotum, she is already a seasoned citizen of the world. The International Management Group, the agency that directs the fortunes of many of the most successful sportsmen and women, owns a large chunk of her and this week she signed up to a whacking sponsorship deal with Sergio Tacchini.

Despite her Swiss domicile, her cheekbones testify to a Slavic ancestry and, in years to come, with a fur collar wrapped round her, she could make a smashing Anna Karenina. One or two locals here obviously fancy themselves in the role of Vronsky. A rather disagreeable youth waved a banner inviting her to give him a ring, and supplied his telephone number for good measure.

The tennis world is hoping ardently that she survives her new-found celebrity, and goes on to win the big ones. The women's game badly needs a new generation of stars now that Steffi Graf is in the

autumn of her years and Monica Seles can no longer be the player she was. So Hingis, attended by her mother, stands on the threshold of a big career.

Wish her well. There was a startling comment on the first



Hingis must come to terms with fame

day of this championship when the 15-year-old Russian girl, Anna Kournikova, said the Women's Tennis Association should reconsider its restrictions on young players (17 and under) entering the professional game. She, too, travels hither and thither with an eager mother in tow. "Nobody can help you better than family," she said. That may be so, but the obverse is that truly no body can hinder you more than family.

Sport, like war, has casualties and the genetics of women's tennis have confused short-term gains with long-term benefits too often for anybody to be certain Hingis will emerge unscathed.

Watanabe, by the way, is 18 and comes from Arcadia, California, that is. If she wants to know where another place is that goes by the same name she can ask the girl-woman she beat yesterday.

Capriati lived there once — or thought she did.

Answers from page 42

ALMSFEE

(b) The payment also called Peter's pence and, Reme-scot "anciently paid to the pope. Blount, *Law Dictionary*, 1697: "Almsfee that is, Peter-Pence, anciently paid in England on the first of August, and given by King *Inca*".

BONIFACE

(c) The name of the jovial innkeeper in Falstaff's *Beatrix Stratagem*, 1707. Whence taken as the generic name of innkeepers, "mine host" or "the landlord" of an inn. Walter Scott, *Watery*, 1829, note 5: "The devolution of the whole actual business of the inn upon the poor guide wife was very common among the Scottish Bonifaces."

AZOTH

(b) The alchemist's name for mercury, as the essential first principle for all metals. Hence the universal remedy of Paracelsus. A corruption of the Arabic word.

BREVET

(a) An official or authoritative message in writing, especially a Papal indulgence, the French diminutive of *brevi* a letter. Also an official document granting certain privileges from a sovereign or government.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

White's best is to play for a draw with 1.Rg8+ f6g (not 1...Kxg5 2.Qg5+ and White will win) 2.Qe7+ Kh8 3.Qg5+ Kf7 4.Qd5+ Kf6 5.Qd6+ Kf5 6.Qd7+ Kf4 7.Qd8+ Kf3 8.Qd9+ Kf2 9.Qd10+ Kf1 10.Qd11+ Kf0 11.Qd12+ Kf1 12.Qd13+ Kf0 13.Qd14+ Kf1 14.Qd15+ Kf0 15.Qd16+ Kf1 16.Qd17+ Kf0 17.Qd18+ Kf1 18.Qd19+ Kf0 19.Qd20+ Kf1 20.Qd21+ Kf0 21.Qd22+ Kf1 22.Qd23+ Kf0 23.Qd24+ Kf1 24.Qd25+ Kf0 25.Qd26+ Kf1 26.Qd27+ Kf0 27.Qd28+ Kf1 28.Qd29+ Kf0 29.Qd30+ Kf1 30.Qd31+ Kf0 31.Qd32+ Kf1 32.Qd33+ Kf0 33.Qd34+ Kf1 34.Qd35+ Kf0 35.Qd36+ Kf1 36.Qd37+ Kf0 37.Qd38+ Kf1 38.Qd39+ Kf0 39.Qd40+ Kf1 40.Qd41+ Kf0 41.Qd42+ Kf1 42.Qd43+ Kf0 43.Qd44+ Kf1 44.Qd45+ Kf0 45.Qd46+ Kf1 46.Qd47+ Kf0 47.Qd48+ Kf1 48.Qd49+ Kf0 49.Qd50+ Kf1 50.Qd51+ Kf0 51.Qd52+ Kf1 52.Qd53+ Kf0 53.Qd54+ Kf1 54.Qd55+ Kf0 55.Qd56+ Kf1 56.Qd57+ Kf0 57.Qd58+ Kf1 58.Qd59+ Kf0 59.Qd60+ Kf1 60.Qd61+ Kf0 61.Qd62+ Kf1 62.Qd63+ Kf0 63.Qd64+ Kf1 64.Qd65+ Kf0 65.Qd66+ Kf1 66.Qd67+ Kf0 67.Qd68+ Kf1 68.Qd69+ Kf0 69.Qd70+ Kf1 70.Qd71+ Kf0 71.Qd72+ Kf1 72.Qd73+ Kf0 73.Qd74+ Kf1 74.Qd75+ Kf0 75.Qd76+ Kf1 76.Qd77+ Kf0 77.Qd78+ Kf1 78.Qd79+ Kf0 79.Qd80+ Kf1 80.Qd81+ Kf0 81.Qd82+ Kf1 82.Qd83+ Kf0 83.Qd84+ Kf1 84.Qd85+ Kf0 85.Qd86+ Kf1 86.Qd87+ Kf0 87.Qd88+ Kf1 88.Qd89+ Kf0 89.Qd90+ Kf1 90.Qd91+ Kf0 91.Qd92+ Kf1 92.Qd93+ Kf0 93.Qd94+ Kf1 94.Qd95+ Kf0 95.Qd96+ Kf1 96.Qd97+ Kf0 97.Qd98+ Kf1 98.Qd99+ Kf0 99.Qd100+ Kf1 100.Qd101+ Kf0 101.Qd102+ Kf1 102.Qd103+ Kf0 103.Qd104+ Kf1 104.Qd105+ Kf0 105.Qd106+ Kf1 106.Qd107+ Kf0 107.Qd108+ Kf1 108.Qd109+ Kf0 109.Qd110+ Kf1 110.Qd111+ Kf0 111.Qd112+ Kf1 112.Qd113+ Kf0 113.Qd114+ Kf1 114.Qd115+ Kf0 115.Qd116+ Kf1 116.Qd117+ Kf0 117.Qd118+ Kf1 118.Qd119+ Kf0 119.Qd120+ Kf1 120.Qd121+ Kf0 121.Qd122+ Kf1 122.Qd123+ Kf0 123.Qd124+ Kf1 124.Qd125+ Kf0 125.Qd126+ Kf1 126.Qd127+ Kf0 127.Qd128+ Kf1 128.Qd129+ Kf0 129.Qd130+ Kf1 130.Qd131+ Kf0 131.Qd132+ Kf1 132.Qd133+ Kf0 133.Qd134+ Kf1 134.Qd135+ Kf0 135.Qd136+ Kf1 136.Qd137+ Kf0 137.Qd138+ Kf1 138.Qd139+ Kf0 139.Qd140+ Kf1 140.Qd141+ Kf0 141.Qd142+ Kf1 142.Qd143+ Kf0 143.Qd144+ Kf1 144.Qd145+ Kf0 145.Qd146+ Kf1 146.Qd147+ Kf0 147.Qd148+ Kf1 148.Qd149+ Kf0 149.Qd150+ Kf1 150.Qd151+ Kf0 151.Qd152+ Kf1 152.Qd153+ Kf0 153.Qd154+ Kf1 154.Qd155+ Kf0 155.Qd156+ Kf1 156.Qd157+ Kf0 157.Qd158+ Kf1 158.Qd159+ Kf0 159.Qd160+ Kf1 160.Qd161+ Kf0 161.Qd162+ Kf1 162.Qd163+ Kf0 163.Qd164+ Kf1 164.Qd165+ Kf0 165.Qd166+ Kf1 166.Qd167+ Kf0 167.Qd168+ Kf1 168.Qd169+ Kf0 169.Qd170+ Kf1 170.Qd171+ Kf0 171.Qd172+ Kf1 172.Qd173+ Kf0 173.Qd174+ Kf1 174.Qd175+ Kf0 175.Qd176+ Kf1 176.Qd177+ Kf0 177.Qd178+ Kf1 178.Qd179+ Kf0 179.Qd180+ Kf1 180.Qd181+ Kf0 181.Qd182+ Kf1 182.Qd183+ Kf0 183.Qd184+ Kf1 184.Qd185+ Kf0 185.Qd186+ Kf1 186.Qd187+ Kf0 187.Qd188+ Kf1 188.Qd189+ Kf0 189.Qd190+ Kf1 190.Qd191+ Kf0 191.Qd192+ Kf1 192.Qd193+ Kf0 193.Qd194+ Kf1 194.Qd195+ Kf0 195.Qd196+ Kf1 196.Qd197+ Kf0 197.Qd198+ Kf1 198.Qd199+ Kf0 199.Qd200+ Kf1 200.Qd201+ Kf0 201.Qd202+ Kf1 202.Qd203+ Kf0 203.Qd204+ Kf1 204.Qd205+ Kf0 205.Qd206+ Kf1 206.Qd207+ Kf0 207.Qd208+ Kf1 208.Qd209+ Kf0 209.Qd210+ Kf1 210.Qd211+ Kf0 211.Qd212+ Kf1 212.Qd213+ Kf0 213.Qd214+ Kf1 214.Qd215+ Kf0 215.Qd216+ Kf1 216.Qd217+ Kf0 217.Qd218+ Kf1 218.Qd219+ Kf0 219.Qd220+ Kf1 220.Qd221+ Kf0 221.Qd222+ Kf1 222.Qd223+ Kf0 223.Qd224+ Kf1 224.Qd225+ Kf0 225.Qd226+ Kf1 226.Qd227+ Kf0 227.Qd228+ Kf1 228.Qd229+ Kf0 229.Qd230+ Kf1 230.Qd231+ Kf0 231.Qd232+ Kf1 232.Qd233+ Kf0 233.Qd234+ Kf1 234.Qd235+ Kf0 235.Qd236+ Kf1 236.Qd237+ Kf0 237.Qd238+ Kf1 238.Qd239+ Kf0 239.Qd240+ Kf1 240.Qd241+ Kf0 241.Qd242+ Kf1 242.Qd243+ Kf0 243.Qd244+ Kf1 244.Qd245+ Kf0 245.Qd246+ Kf1 246.Qd247+ Kf0 247.Qd248+ Kf1 248.Qd249+ Kf0 249.Qd250+ Kf1 250.Qd251+ Kf0 251.Qd252+ Kf1 252.Qd253+ Kf0 253.Qd254+ Kf1 254.Qd255+ Kf0 255.Qd256+ Kf1 256.Qd257+ Kf0 257.Qd258+ Kf1 258.Qd259+ Kf0 259.Qd260+ Kf1 260.Qd261+ Kf0 261.Qd262+ Kf1 262.Qd263+ Kf0 263.Qd264+ Kf1 264.Qd

Doctors in wonderland; a dancer's adieu

In less than 15 seconds the damage is done. As yet another series of *Peak Practice* (ITV) gets under way, the opening titles remind us of the latest trio of highly qualified medical practitioners to grace The Beeches. They get about five seconds each – two to look either bravely beautiful or casually handsome, two-and-a-half to rush about in slow motion and a crucial half-second when they pause to acknowledge the camera. So, having neatly confirmed that these are not real people at all, it's on with the story.

I can never quite work out whether it's that annoys me more or the music. Deep-dee-dum 'screches' something high-pitched and horrible. What is it? I've no idea; but I have a recurring nightmare of a bored producer sitting down one day and saying: "I know, we'll try real heartstrings." This tooth-piercing theme

recurs relentlessly in assorted variations. There's the romantic variation, the tearful variation... When last night's episode began at a funeral, the one real surprise was that these four little notes couldn't manage their own *Nimrod*.

This less than subtle manipulation of our emotions also acquired a new weapon – the sky. That's right, if the colour of the sky doesn't fit the moment, someone does something clever with a camera and they change it. "Is that brooding enough for you, AJ?" "Perfect... and action."

Alas, yes, the action – all those lingering reaction shots that the series has made its own: "Can you look a bit more bemused, Simon?" or "Any chance of just a little more hurt, Gary lover?" In both cases (Simon Shepherd plays Will Preston, while Gary Mavers is the classic car-driving Andrew Artwood), it very much doubt-

Having said all that, however, I found encouraging signs last night to suggest that the show's inexplicable popularity will continue. Nobody clutched a steaming coffee cup to a chunky jumper (encouraging, but also something of a disappointment); the central story about the little girl with epilepsy was convincingly told and particularly well acted by Ian Burfield as her caring but incompetent stepfather, and the latest time-up of doctors looks less annoying than for some time.

Dr Preston, you see, has finally been rumbled by the General Medical Council ("Come on laddie, you can't be a doctor with a haircut like that – admit it, you're an actor") and, in a couple of episodes time, is off to pasture new. With Dr Artwood back in the fold, that left just the one vacancy to be filled, presumably by Dr Shearer (Adri-

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

an Lukis, last seen playing Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*) I hope he's brought enough jitters.

Rudolf Nureyev wasn't much of a pullover man – berets and turbans were more his thing, as we discovered in *Omnibus Dancing with Darkness* (BBC1) when a succession of elaborate headgear passed before us. The timing of the film was curious (fourth anniversary

of deaths are not normally significant, and even less so when you miss them by a few days), but the intention was clear. This was serious tribute time.

Teresa Griffith's film was beautifully made, lovingly assembled and – helped by Alexander Balanescu's haunting violin music – deeply, deeply sentimental. A friend told us that Nureyev had always wanted to die on stage, an ambition he almost realised at the emotional curtain call for *Bayadère* in Paris in 1992. Now Griffiths gave him the posthumous chance to bid *adieu* again – this time on television.

No dissenting voices were countenanced and – barring a brief descent into a former New York bath-house – no startling revelations sought. Nureyev was gay, was diagnosed HIV-positive in 1984 and spent the last decade of his life battling against age and AIDS. The story of that final

Anthea Turner who, after looking high and low for a suitable vehicle for her talents, stumbled across Pet Power (ITV). This proved to be a cross between *999*, *Hearts of Gold* and Channel 4's *Absolutely Animals*. Bit of a mongrel, then.

To judge by the first programme, the big problem is not Anthea but finding sufficient material. Tess, the life-saving labrador, was a great story ("we've recreated the heart-stopping events using actors and one animal actor") but clearly some years out of date. A rather elderly and plump labrador duly waddled into the studio to take a much deserved bow.

Still, I enjoyed Popeye, the jealous parrot who has set wife against husband and in his spare time strips wallpaper. According to a parrot behaviourist (I don't recall one of those on *What's My Line?*) it's because his cage is too high. Nothing worse than a parrot getting above his perch, is there?

BBC1

6.00am BUSINESS BREAKFAST (36560)

7.00 BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (1) (40116)

8.00 BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (1) (4043689)

9.20 ALL OVER THE SHOP (805683)

9.45 KILROY (100315)

10.20 CAN'T COOK, WON'T COOK (55318)

11.00 NEWS (1) and weather (3630467)

11.05 THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW (774824)

11.45 SILLIES PEOPLE (6183134)

12.00 NEWS (1) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (789486)

12.05pm THE ALPHABET GAME (6125370)

12.30 GOING FOR A SONG (3683825)

12.35 THE WEATHER SHOW (7373592)

1.00 NEWS (1) and weather (34045)

1.30 REGIONAL NEWS (4043548)

1.40 NEIGHBOURS (1) (7485232)

2.05 POLICE RESCUE (8611776)

2.50 PUT IT TO THE TEST with Carol Vorderman (3857195)

3.00 HOLIDAY OUTINGS: Malaysia (1) (5626776)

3.30 FILM: THE STARS (3853944) 3.50

Chuckles (3843808) 4.10 Popes and Son (1649560) 4.35 Wild House (2622757) 5.00 Newsround (1) (4220981)

5.10 Baby Peter (1) (1867738)

5.15 NEIGHBOURS (1) (465134)

5.30 NEWS (1) and weather (341)

5.30 REGIONAL NEWS (221)

7.00 A QUESTION OF SPORT (1) (3925)

7.30 TOMORROW'S WORLD Can measuring magnetic disturbances provide an accurate way of predicting imminent earthquakes? Plus, how's the today's result of the 21st century? (1) (405)

8.00 HOW DO THEY DO THAT? Emma Holmes and Esther McVey meet a circus强人 who was once a pageant and report on the special effects in *Red Dwarf* and the remarkable design of a gravity-defying theme park waterlide (1) (305202)

8.50 POINTS OF VIEW (1) (32331)

9.00 NEWS (1) and weather (2350)

9.30 COMMON AS BRICK The boys try to earn a little extra on the side by decorating the local church (1) (2674889)

10.45 SPORTSNIGHT Highlights of tonight's FA Cup third round replay and the night's action. Plus, a preview of the 103rd live national championship which begins on Saturday, with Wales' trip to Murrayfield to face Scotland, and Ireland's matador with the French at Lansdowne Road (2430029)

12.25pm FILM: THE LASER MAN (1986) starring Marc Hayashi, Mariano Urbano, and Tony Kealohau. A scientist accidentally kills his assistant, but subsequently goes on to invent a small, yet deadly laser gun. Directed by Peter Wang (5633350) WALES: 1.05 FILM: The Laser Man (562351) 2.00 News headlines (8749582)

1.55 WEATHER (2497446)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder directly from the screen. See page 220 in *The Times* for the Video PlusCodes for the programme you wish to record. Videoplus+ ("1"), Pluscode ("2"), and Video Programmer are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

7.15am SEE HEAR BREAKFAST NEWS (610026) 7.30 Help! Is it the Hair Bear

Buzz (249405) 7.55 Record Breakers Gold (363660) 8.20 Teddy Trucks (315184) 8.25 Spot (5402950) 9.35 The Record (383815) 9.00 Daytime on Two: Jeunes Francophones (888484) 9.25 See You, See Me (422078) 9.45 Words and Pictures (3115812) 10.00 Playdays (565701) 10.30 Radio Numberba (587735) 10.45 Cats Eyes (8978028) 11.00 Around Scotland (502275) 11.20 Music Makers (363860) 11.40 Talking Issues (6182405) 12.00 Spanish Globe (7862028) 12.30 History File: 20th Century Wrap (762912) 12.30 Working Lunch (762904) 1.00 Geography (9020399) 1.20 Thunderbirds in France (9020476) 1.25 Zig Zag (80261734) 1.45 Come On! (4498360) 2.00 Teddies (5862047) 2.20 Everyone's Got One (9026207) 2.45 WALES: Bowls 3.00 News (5684573) 3.05 Westmorland (7242221) 3.15 News (257778)

4.00 Today's the Day (194) WALES: (610026) Bowls 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (318) 5.00 Esther (1) (6531) 5.30 The Village (484406) 5.35 Turning Points (359979)

5.00 STAR TRAC: THE NEXT GENERATION (1) (246979)

6.45 TREV AND SIMON'S TRANSMISSION IMPOSSIBLE (892198)

7.00 HANCOCK (D4W) (1) (3467)

7.30 ALVIN HALL'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL INVESTING

Market analysis on the increasing popularity of stock market capitalism among working-class investors (357)

8.00 DELIA SMITH'S WINTER COLLECTION (1) (2115)

8.30 FILM: THE SEA KING (3853944) 8.45 Popes and Son (1649560) 8.45 Wild House (2622757) 5.00 Newsround (1) (4220981)

5.10 Baby Peter (1) (1867738)

5.15 NEIGHBOURS (1) (465134)

5.30 NEWS (1) and weather (341)

5.30 REGIONAL NEWS (221)

7.00 A QUESTION OF SPORT (1) (3925)

7.30 TOMORROW'S WORLD Can measuring

magnetic disturbances provide an accurate way of predicting imminent earthquakes? Plus, how's the today's result of the 21st century? (1) (405)

8.00 HOW DO THEY DO THAT? Emma Holmes and Esther McVey meet a circus

strongman who was once a pageant and report on the special effects in *Red Dwarf* and the remarkable design of a gravity-defying theme park waterlide (1) (305202)

8.50 POINTS OF VIEW (1) (32331)

9.00 NEWS (1) and weather (2350)

9.30 COMMON AS BRICK The boys try to earn a little extra on the side by decorating the local church (1) (2674889)

10.45 SPORTSNIGHT Highlights of tonight's FA Cup third round replay and the night's action. Plus, a preview of the 103rd live national championship which begins on Saturday, with Wales' trip to Murrayfield to face Scotland, and Ireland's matador with the French at Lansdowne Road (2430029)

12.25pm FILM: THE LASER MAN (1986) starring Marc Hayashi, Mariano Urbano, and Tony Kealohau. A scientist accidentally kills his assistant, but subsequently goes on to invent a small, yet deadly laser gun. Directed by Peter Wang (5633350) WALES: 1.05 FILM: The Laser Man (562351) 2.00 News headlines (8749582)

1.55 WEATHER (2497446)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder directly from the screen. See page 220 in *The Times* for the Video PlusCodes for the programme you wish to record. Videoplus+ ("1"), Pluscode ("2"), and Video Programmer are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

CHOICE

Rick Stein's Fruits of the Sea BBC2, 8.30pm

It is an axiom of cookery programmes that nothing ever goes wrong or, if it does, you and I never see it. So a little bit of history is made as our Cornish gastronome embarks on a recipe he has never tried before and admits, in full view of the camera, that he is not overwhelmed with the result. His young son is less diplomatic. He will not even pick up his knife and fork and have a taste. Stein's show is unusual in other ways. You cannot imagine Gary Rhodes or Delia Smith quoting John Betjeman in between dishes, let alone T.S. Eliot. Verse can be useful as well as evocative. In another poem Stein discovers a complete recipe for ratatouille. He keeps to his last turn, the Thai fish cake. It obviously tastes better than it looks and Stein reckons it could be the most popular thing he has done on television.

Travelog Channel 4, 8.30pm

As a holiday destination Vanuatu is unlikely to figure either in the travel brochures or on the itinerary of Judith Chalmers. The beaches are splendid but other basic tourist facilities, such as hotels or even roads, are somewhat lacking. In case you are still wondering, Vanuatu is a chain of 83 small islands between the Solomons and Fiji. Its biggest claim to fame is to have provided the inspiration for *South Pacific*. Now it is briefly famous once more as Pete McCarthy visits a local chief, Jocular, but never patronising. McCarthy is the ideal guide. Essentially he does the standard innocent abroad routine, though getting caught-up in a military coup was presumably not in the original script. The show is worth watching for McCarthy's joke about a tubby islander looking as if he has just swallowed Robbie Coltrane.

Hollywood Lovers: The Wedding Day ITV, 9.00pm (not YTV/C3NE)

Los Angeles folk clearly believe in getting married or they would not do it so often. The tale of this year's most married woman (22 times) is claimed by Linda Gray. It is only appropriate that her lucky number 23 should be the world's most married man, one Glenn "Sonny" Wolfe, who boasts 29 marriages and despite being confined to a wheelchair has clearly not finished yet. This geriatric coupling is the climax to another trawl through Hollywood vulgarity, courtesy of slickly edited soundbites from Jackie Collins, Stephanie Beacham, a starlet from Bewitched, Bill Clinton's younger brother and a woman in Las Vegas who says she once conducted 224 weddings in 24 hours. Admittedly it was Valentine's Day, and a Saturday, but such frenetic throughput belongs more to a factory-assembly line than a declaration of love and commitment.

Trouble At The Top: Surprises in Store BBC2, 9.50pm

This splendid series on business comebacks features the husband and wife team of Gerald and Vera Weisfeld, who, after six years out of the retail business, launch a new enterprise selling both cheap and expensive goods in the same shop (1) (686134).

10.30 NEWSPAPER (1) (723486) 11.00 The TIME, THE PLACE (1) (60142) 11.30 FILM: HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER (599121)

12.30pm FILM: THE NIGHT (1) (723486)

1.00 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

1.30 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

2.00 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

2.30 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

3.00 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

3.30 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (542940)

3.45 FILM: THE CHART SHOW (1) (54294



RUGBY UNION 45

Scotland look to Wainwright's lead in five nations'

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 1997

TENNIS 46

Capriati's campaign ends in tears after first-round defeat

Scot with proven pedigree for success assumes Keegan's mantle a second time

Newcastle manage to lure Dalglish

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

SO, AFTER six days in which football became so overheated about the resignation of Kevin Keegan, his replacement has walked in to Newcastle United. It is the second time that Kenny Dalglish has replaced Keegan, after his wearing of the Liverpool No 7 shirt in 1977, but should 'canny Kenny' bring to St James' Park the championship that is eminently winnable this season, he will go where no man has trodden before.

Already, Dalglish stands level with Herbert Chapman and Brian Clough as the only managers to have won the English title with two different clubs. To gain a third, Dalglish must emulate, in a way, what he did at Blackburn Rovers — although the task is "easy" by comparison. For, in helping Jack Walker to buy the trophy for Blackburn, Dalglish filled an empty space in the boardroom cabinet that had lasted 81 years. All he has to do for the Geordies is to put that trophy where it has not been for 70 years.

As he walked into St James' Park at six o'clock prompt last night, there were no signs of burden, no apparent heavy onus, resting on Dalglish. He looked as if he had just walked in off the 18th green. His features are slightly more rounded, less gaunt, than when he was in full training as a magnificent player, or when the management demands



took the toll that forced him to resign from Liverpool, burned out, in 1991.

Too little has been made of the harrowing impact that Hillsborough, the death of 96 Liverpool supporters, had on Dalglish. Too much had been conjectured about his departure from Blackburn, where, the task achieved, he handed the reins to his assistant, Ray Harford. He said yesterday that he had left for a

footballing reason... to try to protect Ray Harford a little bit".

Therefore, the fear on Tyneside — that Dalglish is a quitter, who runs when the stress barometer is high — is unreasoned. Remember, this is a player whose first professional mentor, Jock Stein, died on the managerial bench. Better still, remember the apparent instant rapport between Dalglish and Terry McDermott, the caretaker manager, as they sat besides Sir John Hall, the Newcastle chairman, yesterday evening.

Remember, also, that football, particularly in the modern era, is about winning. It was an opponent, the late Don Revie, who observed: "God put Kenny Dalglish on this earth to be a winner on the football field."

Once Alan Hansen, his former Liverpool team-mate, had publicly said that Dalglish was waiting for the call from Tyneside, once Bob Robson, the first choice of Sir John, said "no" for the final time, then the job, the destiny, was Dalglish's.

Twenty-four hours earlier, Spurards had nibbled on the red herring that Robson was about to defect from Barcelona. In the same hour, three Newcastle directors — Sir John's son, Douglas, among them — had journeyed to Dalglish territory in Lancashire to offer him the job.

He goes to St James' on a 3½-year contract; it seemed, last night, to take 3½ minutes for Dalglish to look settled. He leaves the arrangements for the FA Cup third-round replay against Charlton Athletic tonight in the hands of McDermott and Arthur Cox. "They've prepared the team, I'm happy to go along with that, it would be confusing to do otherwise," he said.

Dalglish can never, and he knows it, replace the aura of Kevin Keegan. Nobody could. Robson, the son of a Durham miner, who gave football back something rather special when he spoke of the integrity of having signed a contract, and that it could not be broken even for Newcastle, could have prolonged the Geordie connection. Sir John, looking emotionally drawn as even a multimillionaire might yesterday, certainly wanted to do so.

Yet, perhaps in time, an outsider might prove better for Newcastle's future. This has nothing to do with the share flotation, details of which will be announced tomorrow. The club insisted yesterday that the flotation was not the trigger for Keegan's sudden departure. Until and unless Keegan returns from Florida, to tell the people of Newcastle exactly what compelled him to walk away, then it is right for those at Newcastle to do so.

"It's no good trying to dismiss what Kevin's done as a manager," Dalglish said. "I think you all know what he has achieved."



McDermott, who will be in charge of the team tonight, shares a joke with Dalglish after the Scot's appointment as manager of Newcastle United

Old hand makes assured debut

By LOUISE TAYLOR

PUNCTUATED by smiles, witty one-liners and eulogistic tributes to his predecessor, Kenny Dalglish's first press conference at Newcastle United managed was conducted along highly diplomatic lines.

The only instance when a flash of the old, rather more feisty, Dalglish voluntarily began talking about his interest in youth development. "The schoolboy and youth set-up is very important. It's something I really enjoyed being involved with at Blackburn."

Dalglish will leave preparations for the FA Cup replay

against Charlton Athletic in

night to Terry McDermott

and return to the North East.

Dismissing suggestions that he might commute, Dalglish said: "I don't want to live alone."

is likely to continue as No 2. "Terry is someone I know I can trust," Dalglish said.

Stressing he was not about to "start sacking" the coaching staff, Dalglish also confirmed he and his family would be moving lock stock and barrel to the North East.

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Dismissing suggestions that he might commute, Dalglish said: "I don't want to live alone."

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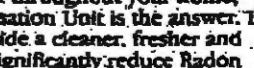
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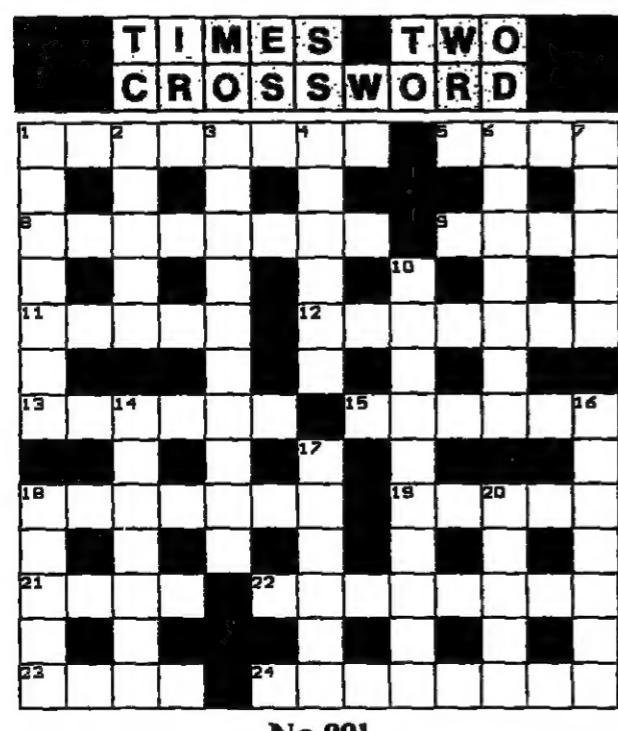


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BOBBY ROBSON



gives his reasons for resisting temptation

ish. I might be old-fashioned. But, whatever happens now, however long I keep the job, at least I can feel I honoured my part of the bargain with Barcellona. I value loyalty, even though there does not seem to be too much of it about in football any more.

All through my years at Ipswich, I had great offers, but I always stayed because I had a contract. Even when I was England manager and I was getting some criticism, people said: "Why don't you pack it in?" But I saw it as a matter of

honour. My father was like that and I have got my father's blood.

I know that what Newcastle has done so far has been magnificent and the job was tailor-made for me. It is home, too. There would have been a nice symmetry about going back, but my honour and my commitment should be here in Barcellona because their honour and their commitment was to me when they brought me to Spain last August.

In some ways, I suppose it might have been easier for me to walk away if the result had gone differently on Monday. That result did not do me any favours in a number of ways. If we had beaten Hercules, we would have gone above Real Madrid to the top of the table and, if the president had given his permission, I could have left Barcelona sitting on top of the league.

But that defeat, and the support I got from Mr Nursey afterwards on what was a disappointing night for him, has only made me even more determined to fight to bring the championship to Barcellona this year. I believe we can do it and, when that happens, it will be beyond compare. It will be something special.

Of course, I know that if

things do not go according to plan then the pressure will build up on me. Job security is not everything it might be in Spanish football but I did not seek any written assurances from the president on Monday. I have a two-year contract and that is assurance enough.

I have got a huge challenge here and the club has made its best start in 33 years. Despite the loss to Hercules, if we beat Real Betis next Saturday, we can still go to the top of the league and the future will look very bright. We have got a good run of games coming up, games that should favour us, we are well placed.

After I had made my decision and Sir John Hall was in the air on the way back to England, I knew that he was going to announce the name of the new Newcastle United manager last night and that it was not going to be me. So I walked down to the beach near our villa and treated myself to a glass of champagne.

My wife and I have got a great life out here and I have got plenty of blessings to count. Most of all, I am happy. I made the right decision and that my conscience is clear. I tell you one thing, though. Kenny Dalglish is a lucky guy.